A- LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE: CONTRASTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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April 1997

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DECLARATION

I declare that all the material in this thesis which is not my own has, to the best of my ability, been acknowledged. The material in the thesis has not been submitted previously by the author for a degree at this or at any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Tony Edwards for the critical feedback he gave me in the preparation of this thesis. A special thanks also goes to Margaret, Lucy and Sarah for their patience and support.

Abstract

This study is an investigation of methods of teaching and learning in the A-level English curriculum consisting both of the traditional A-level English literature and the more recent arrival of A-level English language. It is generally assumed in commentaries on A-level English teaching that language is taught differently from literature because of differences in aims, content and ideology. English language is seen as a deliberate move away from the more 'pure' academic study of literary texts and towards more 'applied' and even partly 'vocational' study in which independent and collaborative forms of learning are strongly encouraged. There is, however, little empirical evidence about how students are taught and how they learn in these different courses. The study addresses these limitations by carrying out an intensive, qualitative study of the teaching styles of ten teachers who teach across the two A-level English subjects. Video recordings of twenty complete lessons (i.e. 10 English language and 10 English literature) were analysed using a formal framework of analysis adapted from the study of discourse analysis. This system identifies the organisation of the classroom discourse so as to allow for a comparison of the patterning of teaching exchanges across the two subjects. The study also investigates, using semi-structured interviews, how the teachers perceive the learning objectives of the two subjects, and the match between those objectives and the teaching and learning methods used to achieve them. The findings suggest that teachers do not vary their teaching style when teaching across the two English subjects at A-levels supporting an extensive statistical study of students' perceptions of the instructional practices employed by teachers which also found a lack of pedagogic distinctiveness between the two subjects. The analysis revealed that teacher-led recitation is a prominent feature of the discourse in both A-level English language and literature.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

This present study is an investigation of methods of teaching and learning in the A-level English curriculum. It includes both the traditional A-level English literature and the more recent arrival of A-level English language as a distinct field of study. It investigates modes of teaching and learning in the two subjects by analysing video recording of complete lessons using a system adapted from discourse analysis which identifies the organisation of classroom language so as to compare the patterning of teacher-student interaction .

The mid-1980s saw the introduction of A-level English language as a separate subject. Up until that time A-level English, since its introduction in 1951, had mainly consisted of the study of literary texts selected from a traditional canon of English literature and the explicit study of the nature and functions of language had not been a major feature.

Not only was the new A-level English language seen by commentators as being different from English literature in its aims and content, drawing on the study of linguistics, particularly sociolinguistics, but also in terms of its teaching and assessment methods, encouraging investigational, independent and collaborative forms of learning more usually associated with vocational alternatives to A-level. According to Scott (1989), it was the first A-level connected with English to allow a substantial element of practical work or to require study of its own theoretical position. It did so by laying great stress on the relationship between theory and practice and defining the subject largely in terms of its application. There were claims of a strong vocational element because it looked at knowledge about

language and the uses of English, and because by such means students would increase their competences in its uses.

It is therefore generally assumed in commentaries on A-level English teaching that English language is taught differently from English literature. There is, however, surprisingly little empirical evidence about how students are taught and how they learn in these different courses. Commentators can, therefore, do little more than assume or infer pedagogic distinctiveness.

The widest evidence comes from HMI (though in research terms it has little validity and reliability) and is limited to the teaching of English literature. In their account of how English literature is taught, HMI found that students often had a passive role because of teaching preoccupied with the requirements of the final examination. They therefore found 'a considerable amount of teacher-monologue in evidence' and questioning techniques which 'were sometimes narrow or obscure, with a preconceived notion of the 'correct' answer' (DES 1986: 8). This, they report, often resulted in teacher domination of the classroom discourse with little interactional space for students and a narrow range of written work with little opportunity for wider reading. Their account seems to describe the style of teaching which A-level English language was intended to challenge. However, it was the lack of comparative evidence for such an assumption which prompted me into investigating how the two subjects are taught.

The present study is also concerned with the nature of discussion in A-level English teaching. Discussion is a widely used term is all phases of education; it also has a prominence in many classroom observation schedules despite reasonable doubts as to whether much that is recorded as discussion is more than question, answer and evaluation. The lack of research attention into the use of

discussion in the post-16 context is surprising given the amount of research into classroom talk (c.f. Edwards and Westgate 1994) during the compulsory stage of education and the assumptions made by commentators about the characteristics of sixth form work. Research into classroom talk, underpinned by a social constructivist theory of learning (e.g. Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Barnes, 1992; Barnes and Todd 1995; Wells, 1992) suggests that by talking through or discussing a subject, students actively construct their own knowledge by bringing what they already know to bear on the new information being presented. The listener makes sense of what is being said by responding to it in terms of his/her existing knowledge so that new knowledge is assimilated or accommodated and an initial understanding modified or extended. The class discussion would therefore be a dialogue between teacher and students in which thinking would be made explicit for inspection, extension, modification or correction and supported by relevant arguments. Participants would not only learn from each other but also learn the need for disciplined thinking and the strategies for participating in such work (Wells, 1989).

Such a view on the importance of discussion in A-level teaching is promoted by HMI (DES, 1986/1987) and by commentators on A-level English teaching (Brown and Gifford, 1989; McCulloch *el al*, 1993). It has also featured in the rhetoric about sixth-form teaching, going back to the already nostalgic image of the 'intellectual discipleship' of the Crowther Report (1959), where 'subject-minded' students are introduced to scholarship through the mediating influence of a specialist teacher's knowledge. It is assumed that on the route to 'mastery' of an academic craft there must be increasing opportunities for students to display a growing acquisition of the skills in specialised speech and writing and to demonstrate them without close direction. It is also assumed that A-level carries with it the right to question as students acquire some of the working practices of the subject and participate in the subject discourse. Therefore the ideal lesson at

A-level is often conceived as being a seminar in which the teacher is no more than a leading participant in a process of discovery. The present study therefore examines in detail the nature of 'class discussion' in both A-level English subjects and the roles played by teachers and students in the spoken discourse.

1.2 Background to the study

The present study has its origins in my experience of teaching the two English subjects at A-level and of studying for higher degrees on both 'sides' of the subject. When English language was introduced as a separate A-level in the mid-1980s it was seen as a deliberate move away from the more 'pure' academic study of literary texts and towards more 'applied' and even partly 'vocational' study in which independent and collaborative learning would be strongly encouraged. It also proved interesting to me at a time when I was not only head of English in a Cheshire comprehensive school but also co-ordinator of the school's TVEI programme which also aimed to promote student-centred forms of learning.

Having joined the staff at Newcastle University, I was able to pursue my research interests into post-16 English teaching by becoming involved in two research projects which aimed to provide empirical evidence on teaching and learning processes in the post-16 context: an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project entitled *Methods and Effectiveness in Post-16 Teaching and Learning*, (Edwards, Fitz-Gibbon, Haywood and Meagher, 1996) looking at teaching and learning processes in both academic and vocational courses, and statistical data collected by the *A level Information System* (ALIS) into students' attitudes towards their A-level subjects and their perceptions of the instructional practices employed by teachers within their A-level subjects (Tymms and Vincent 1995).

The ESRC funded research started in January 1993 and subsequently published its findings in April 1996. The research, like the present study, was designed to build on the quantitative data and statistical descriptors produced from the A-Level Information System (ALIS) and its extension to advanced vocational courses. The ALIS evidence was complemented by intensive classroom observation and by interviewing teachers and students in twelve schools and four colleges of further education in the north-east of England. The interviews explored how teachers and students perceived the objectives of the course and the match between those objectives and the teaching and learning methods used to achieve them. In cases where the same teachers taught both A-level and GNVQ, the interviews explored how teachers managed the transition between the two and their perceptions of the students following the two advanced routes. The research therefore had as its main empirical focus current efforts to differentiate advanced 'academic' from advanced 'vocational' full-time education by the content and nature of the learning rather than, as in the past, by its 'level' and consequent status, and to test assertions and assumptions about the nature and organisation of such learning at the post-compulsory stage.

Using a computerised systematic observation programme to record student activities across a range of advanced vocational and academic courses (Meagher, 1995), the study found that while there was a wider range of learning activities on vocational courses, there was a high frequency of apparently didactic methods in both A-level and GNVQ classes. However, some educationally significant differences did occur: IT was used far more frequently in GNVQ classes, as were students' presentation of work to their fellows and being 'helped' by the teacher either individually or in a group; A-level classes were dominated by teacher exposition, teacher-directed question-answer exchanges and note taking and students were likely to be working on the same topic at the same time and to have the nature and timing of the task closely prescribed; GNVQ students

were likely to be working on different topics and individual assignments and to have more control over the pacing of their work but even less control over its content.

Despite such differences, GNVQ classes still often included episodes of formal teaching similar to that more frequently employed in A-level. Such episodes were used to introduce a new unit and to go over the criteria for assessing it, to cover the information needed for the end-tests of underpinning knowledge, to satisfy the teacher that 'real' learning had taken place and to remind the students that they were still working within a structured framework of learning. The findings of the study also suggested that the explicit specification of GNVQ learning outcomes and learning processes demanded by the assessment regime produced a greater consistency in teaching methods between different teachers and between different curriculum areas, unlike in A-level teaching where the way a subject is taught seems to depend more on the nature of the discipline. This finding is also supported by ALIS evidence which shows significant differences in instructional practices employed by teachers in different subjects at A-level.

Furthermore, evidence from the research indicated sharp contrasts between students' reports of the frequency of learning activities, their teachers' estimates of those frequencies, and what observation showed to be routine classroom practices. In other words, there was usually a considerable gap between the teachers' intentions and what students perceived themselves as having experienced or what the researchers observed. The findings of the study also show that Advanced GNVQs were not perceived by teachers and students as offering the 'same' access to higher education and employment as the traditional academic route and that they were seen as providing for less able students.

The ALIS research into students' perceptions of learning activities used in A-level lessons formed part of a 'performance indicator' project (Fitz-Gibbon,1992) which uses statistical procedures and which had been undertaken in the Department of Education, Newcastle University, since 1983. The aim of the project is to measure the 'value added' between GCSE and A-level so as to allow school/college departments a comparative measure of achievement based on the known average GCSE performance of their students, the results to be expected in the light of those scores, and the eventual differences (positive or negative) between the expected grades and those obtained. Such 'distributed research', where high quality information is fed back to schools and colleges for interpretation and future curriculum planning, is seen as fundamental in an effective monitoring system (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996). More recently extensive data on students' attitudes to the subjects being studied and their perception of the instructional practices employed by teachers within those subjects (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) has also been collected by means of a questionnaire to study the variations across A-level subjects and across syllabuses within subjects.

In order to study the relative leniency and severity of Board and syllabus grades at A-level, Tymms and Vincent compared twelve subjects (art, biology, chemistry, economics, French, geography, history, mathematics, further mathematics, physics) using data mainly from 1993 A-level entries. The sample size for both A-level English subjects was the highest for any of the subject areas (English literature n = 6690, English language n = 6523) and here they found no significant differences between boards and across syllabuses despite the controversy surrounding the issue of coursework in A-level English teaching in recent years.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of students taking different boards and syllabuses in English language and English

literature on a six-item questionnaire, each answered on a five-point scale. An 'attitude-to-subject' was derived by computing the average for the six responses. Subjects attracting the highest means were art and further mathematics; lowest were chemistry, economics, French and physics. Overall, though, variation between subjects was slight.

In the case of English language and English literature, students in both subjects were slightly above 'neutral' in their responses to the questionnaire. The evidence gave no support for the view that attitudes of students varied across boards and syllabuses in both subjects, particularly in those cases where students were offered coursework options as part of their studies. Tymms and Vincent (1995) conclude that while teachers may grow dissatisfied with particular syllabuses because they do not provide sufficient stimulus for the teaching of their subject, students are probably less critical because they are not in a position to comment and compare different syllabuses or may not even be aware that there are alternative courses which lead to the same A-level qualification, All that they can reasonably be expected to respond to are their own experiences and feelings, and when they do so no differences between syllabuses are noted.

However, when the students' perceptions of the instructional practices employed by teachers within all twelve subjects were compared to see if there was a differentiation of classroom practices between subjects, large differences in teaching and learning activities were revealed although there was little (if any) variation across syllabuses within subjects. The questionnaire on instructional practices, referred to as Perceived Learning Activities (PLAs), made use of a six-point likert scale in estimating the frequency with which various listed activities were employed by the teacher (1 = never, 6 = every lesson). Twenty two learning activities were included in the questionnaire which previous ALIS studies had shown to be reliable:

1 Presentation of topic by the teacher (chalk and talk)
2 Exercises (working examples)
3 Working questions from previous examination paper with help
4 Working questions from previous examination papers under exam conditions (fixed time, no help)
5 Preparing essays
6 Reading
7 Class discussion led by teacher
8 Discussion in groups
9 Having notes dictated to you
10 Making your own notes from lesson
11 Using duplicated notes (handouts)
12 Practical work (using apparatus or making things)
13 Using audio or visual material
14 Making use of IT
15 Researching a topic (using a variety of reference material)
16 Working in pairs
17 Presenting your work to the class
18 Listening to another student present their work to the class
19 Giving help to another student
20 Receiving help from another student
21 Receiving individual help from your teacher
22 producing original work (experiments, poetry, designing, composing, criticism)

As already discussed, the main finding from the study as a whole was that there were substantial differences between PLAs for the various subjects, but very few differences between syllabuses within subjects. Some of the most dramatic differences can be seen between English literature and mathematics in Figure 1.

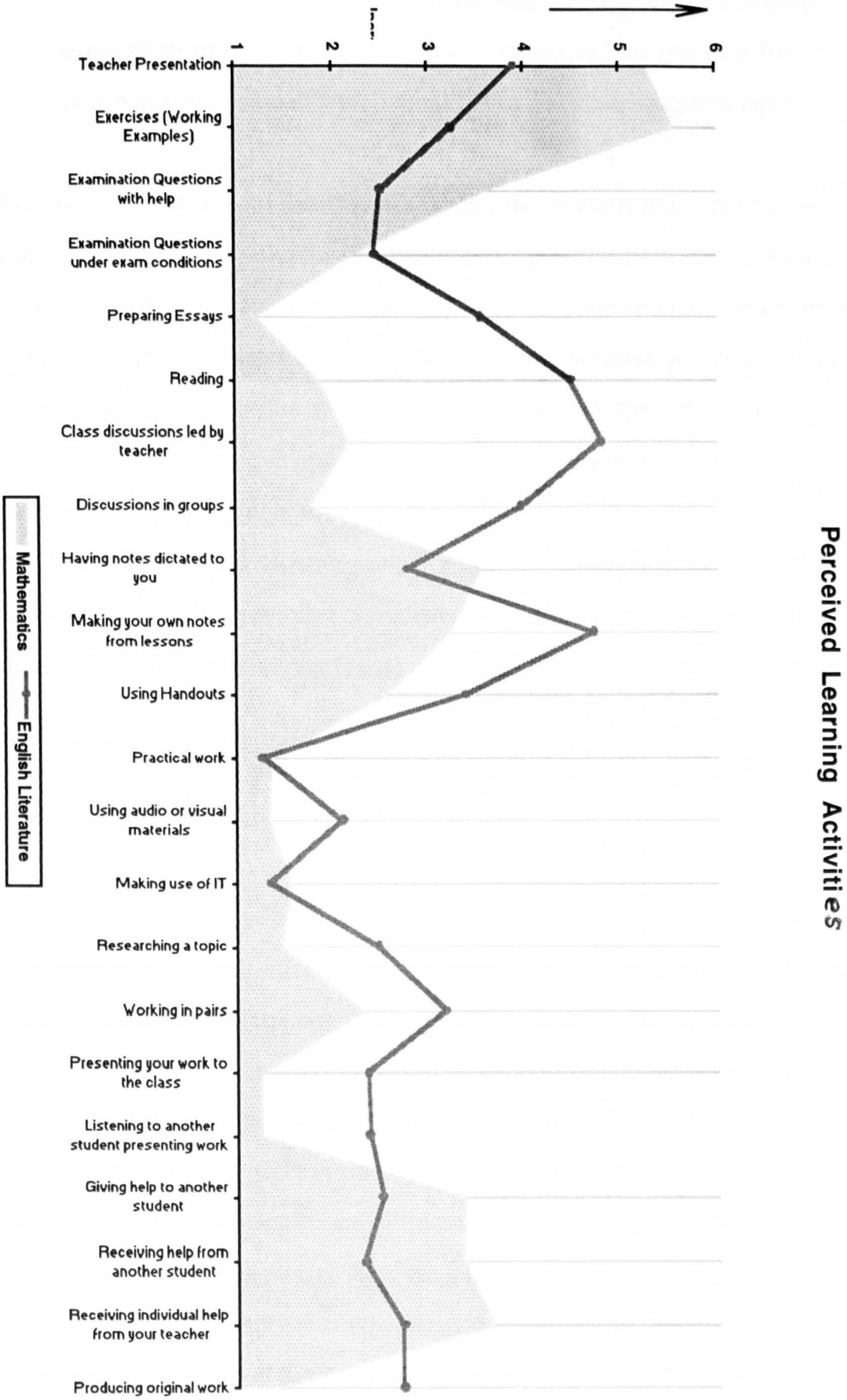


Figure 1 Comparison of PLAs in English and Mathematics

Perceived Learning Activities
Teacher Presentation
Exercises (Working Examples)
Examination Questions with help
Examination Questions under exam conditions
Preparing Essays
Reading
Class discussions led by teacher
Discussions in groups
Having notes dictated to you
Making your own notes from lessons
Using Handouts
Practical work
Using audio or visual materials
Making use of IT
Researching a topic
Working in pairs
Presenting your work to the class
Listening to another student presenting work
Giving help to another student
Receiving help from another student
Receiving individual help from your teacher
Producing original work
1
2
3
4
5
6
Mathematics
English Literature

Mathematics teaching at A-level appears to be dominated by teacher presentation, exercises, dictated notes and working previous examination questions. English literature, by contrast was more characterised by 'class discussion', 'making own notes' and 'reading'. There seems to be evidence here of different subject cultures leading to the conclusion that 'how you teach depends on what you teach' (Fitz-Gibbon and Wright, 1995: 7). Hodgson (1994), however, suggests that the pedagogic differences between subjects as revealed in the ALIS data may be tactical variations on didactic teaching rather than a departure from it, depending on the kinds of learning which are perceived as being effective by teachers and students within the different subject areas.

When the pattern of the PLAs for English language and English literature were compared, there were striking similarities (Figure 2).

It was assumed by Tymms and Vincent (1995) that the two English subjects at A-level were often taught by the same teachers. Similar findings were also reported in the teaching of Mathematics and Further Mathematics where it was again assumed that the two subjects were taught by the same teachers. The data therefore showed that there was remarkably little variation in the employment of each learning activity between English language and English literature and between the syllabuses within each subject. Such a finding challenges the assumption that has often been made amongst commentators (discussed in Chapter 2) and teachers, and which forms the main working hypothesis of the present study, that there are differences in the way the two subjects are taught.

Given the numbers involved in the ALIS data, however, the picture of teaching and learning activities was necessarily derived from students' perceptions rather than observations.

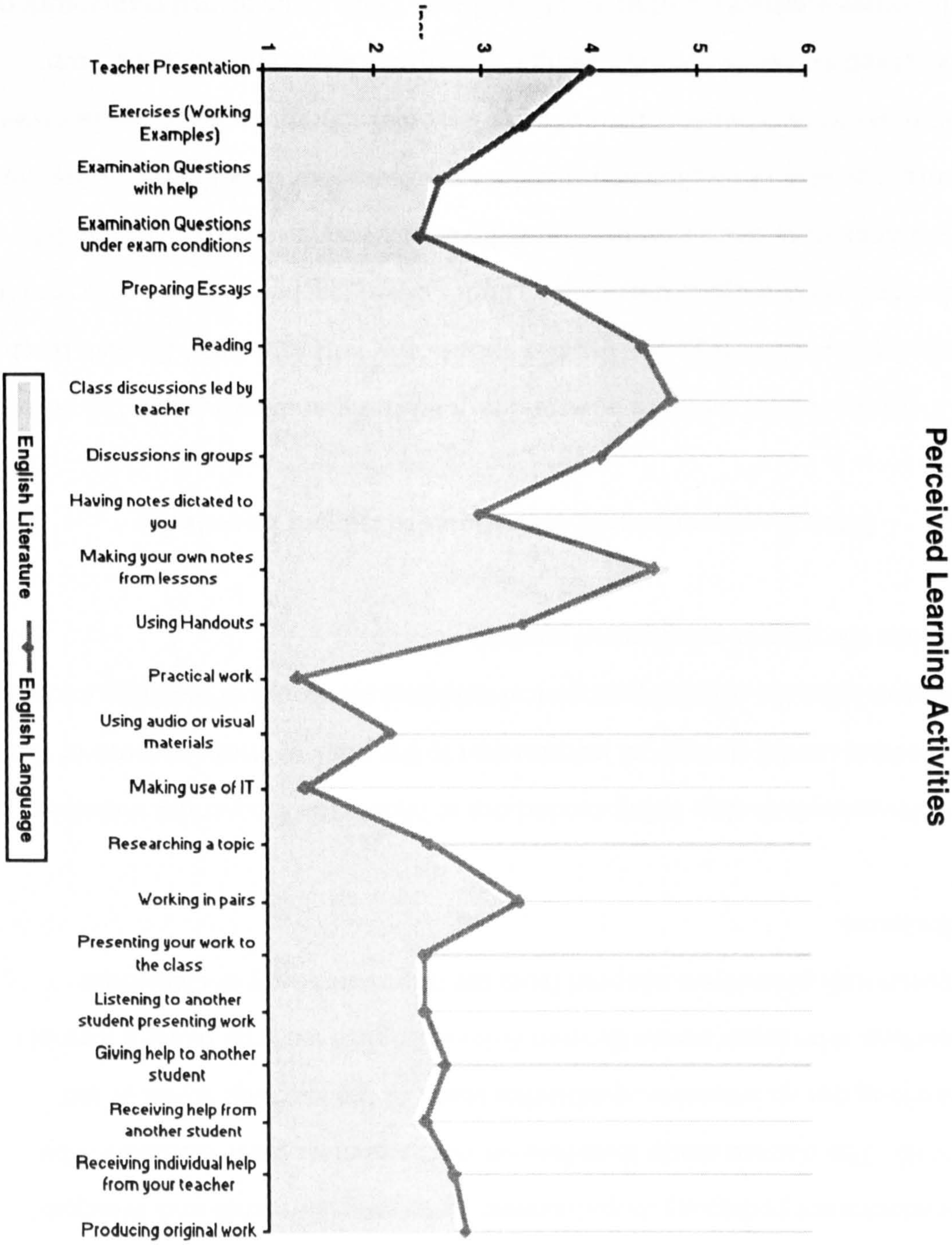


Figure 2 Comparison of PLAs in English language and English literature

Perceived Learning Activities
6
5
4
3
2
1
Teacher Presentation
Exercises (Working Examples)
Examination Qustions with help
Examination Questions under exam conditions
Preparing Essays
Reading
Class discussions led by teacher
Discussions in groups
Having notes dictated to you
Making your own notes from lessons
Using Handouts
Practical work
Using audio or visual materials
Making use of IT
Researching a topic
Working in pairs
Presenting your work to the class
Listening to another student presenting work
Giving help to another student
Receiving help from another student
Receiving individual help from your teacher
Producing original work
English Literature
English Language

Another limitation of the ALIS statistical evidence is that the PLAs do not include the combination of teacher-presentation and teacher-directed question-and answer which research suggests constitutes the teacher-controlled 'recitation' of prescribed knowledge which has been the predominant pedagogy in mainstream schooling (Edwards and Westgate, 1994). The current study therefore set out to address these limitations by carrying out an intensive, qualitative study of the teaching styles of ten teachers who teach across the two A-level English subjects using a formal framework of analysis adapted from the linguistic study of classroom discourse.

Both research studies being carried out at Newcastle University therefore provided useful contextual information to the present study because of their unique focus on collecting empirical evidence on modes of teaching and learning within the post-16 educational context.

1.3 How the present study contributes to current knowledge

Given the lack of research into modes of teaching and learning in the post-16 educational context generally, and specifically within A-level English teaching, I decided to investigate the teaching styles of ten teachers who teach across the two English subjects examined at A-level. Twenty lessons (i.e. 10 English language and 10 English literature) were selected for detailed recording and analysis from a larger corpus of sixty lesson observations (each teacher was observed six times in total) using a descriptive apparatus adapted from discourse analysis (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992). This formal framework of analysis was chosen in preference to other systems of classroom observation, discussed in Chapter 4, because it explicitly examines the patterning of teaching exchanges between teachers and students. It was found that by quantifying and

comparing the patterning of the different types of teaching exchanges a comparison of teaching styles could be made. Although Sinclair and Coulthard (1975: 21) originally intended that discourse analysis could be used to 'make observations on teacher style', no other study had explicitly used it in this way. Therefore, the study was 'test-driving' its use as an analytical tool to compare teaching styles.

The study is also an investigation, using semi-structured interviews, of how the teachers perceive the learning objectives of the two subjects, and the match between those objectives and the teaching and learning methods used to achieve them. In other words, it explores whether they see any distinction in the way the two subjects are conceived and taught.

As discussed earlier, the present study builds on the ALIS statistical data (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) which shows striking similarities in the employment of the learning activities used by teachers in A-level English language and English literature lessons. Such a finding challenges the working hypothesis of the present study, arrived at from a review of the literature on A-level English teaching, that there are distinct differences in the aims of the two subjects and the way they are taught.

The ALIS data found that 'class discussion', 'making own notes' and 'reading' were the most common activities in English language and English literature lessons. However, given that the picture of teaching and learning activities was necessarily derived from students' perceptions rather than from observation, it is limited by how the students interpret each of the activities listed in the questionnaire. The present study therefore aims to address some of these limitations by investigating what constitutes 'class discussion', which was the most frequently reported activity in both subject areas.

1.4 Summary of focus of study

I therefore set out to investigate the hypothesis that teachers do vary their teaching styles when teaching across the two English subjects at A-level and to explore the teachers' perceptions of teaching the two subjects in order to compare their views with the analysis of the patterning of the classroom discourse. It was also hoped that the study would address some of the limitations of the ALIS data by looking further at the interpretation the students were putting on 'classroom discussion' which was the most frequently reported learning activity in A-level English lessons. In order to examine these areas, several questions were addressed.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Is there a pedagogic distinctiveness in the way the two A-level English subjects at A-level are taught as reflected in the patterning of the teacher-student discourse?

2. How do teachers perceive the learning objectives of the two A-level English subjects and is there a match between those objectives and the teaching and learning methods used to achieve them?

3. How do the qualitative findings of the present study relate to the statistical findings of the ALIS data which suggest that teachers do not vary their instructional practices when teaching across the two A-level English subject areas.

1.6 Format of the Study

In order to investigate these issues and identify gaps in our current knowledge, it is necessary to review the relevant literature and research on A-level English teaching. Chapter 2 therefore explores the teaching of A-level English within the general context of post-16 provision, mainstream schooling and higher education. It is also necessary to review the relevant research literature on classroom discourse in mainstream schooling so as to identify and extend our current state of knowledge in the A-level English context. Chapter 3 will address this area.

Chapter 4 examines, and critically evaluates, the appropriateness of various methodological approaches to classroom interaction within the context of the present study and provides a rationale for the choice of research design. Chapter 5 describes the method used in the present study to address the research questions identified in section 1.5.

Chapter 6 provides details of the present empirical study in relation to the differences in the teaching of the two English subjects at A-level as identified in the patterning of the teacher-student interactions. It also looks at the nature of classroom talk at this level revealed in the analysis of the discourse .

In Chapter 7 the main points to emerge from the study are summarised and possible reasons for the findings discussed, together with observations on the way in which the findings contribute to our current understanding.

Chapter 8 discusses the conclusions from the study and considers the implications for current practice and further research.

CHAPTER 2 POST-16 TEACHING AND LEARNING

2.1 Introduction

In order to contextualise the present study this chapter will review the history of the development of English language as a separate subject in the A-level English curriculum which is seen by many commentators as having its own ideology and pedagogy. It will be argued that its development as a separate subject is best understood against the general background of post-16 educational reforms brought about mainly in response to the growing numbers of students staying in full-time education, but within which an old divisiveness remains to provide conspicuous continuity. This chapter therefore briefly reviews the development of vocational alternatives and attempts at reforming the A-level curriculum which has seen the introduction of new 'hybrid' subject like English language with its greater emphasis on practical application, thereby catering for the personal, social and vocational needs of students as part of the mainstream English curriculum. The introduction of A-level English language is also considered against the background of reforms to English studies in higher and secondary education.

2.2 Pressures for change at A-level

Since their introduction in 1951 Advanced levels have been regarded as the direct descendant of university entrance examinations - the Higher Certificate which had been introduced as an external examination in 1944 building on the earlier School Certificate introduced in 1917 - and the major access route to higher education. Edwards (1970) discusses how A-levels brought about an early specialisation for higher education in England and Wales in which there was an emphasis on a 'liberal education' rather than a concentration on mathematics and

science as in other countries. Therefore a major feature of the A-level system has been the control that higher education has been able to exert over the post-16 curriculum. This has led, uniquely to England and Wales, to early subject specialisation and separation of the arts and sciences. Post-16 education has therefore been dominated by the influence of A-level qualifications and preparation for higher education even though A-levels are currently considered to be suitable for about a third of the cohort and about the same proportion progress to higher education. At present about 22 per cent of the cohort achieve two or more good A-levels with about 30 percent of those being entered ending up with nothing at all (Audit commission/HMI, 1993), reflecting the fact that A-levels were originally thought suitable for only about one in twenty.

Reid and Filby (1982) argue that the sixth form, in which most A-level courses are studied, has always represented a tradition whose hallmark is initiation into an elite sustained by an educational ideology based on exclusion. By giving such status to this minority route it is argued by many commentators on policy (e.g. RSA, 1991; Jessup, 1993; Raffe and Surridge, 1995) that the majority of young people are disadvantaged at a time when there is widespread recognition of the need to raise the standards achieved by the whole cohort to prepare young people more effectively for employment in a modern economy.

Industrialists (CBI, 1989, 1991) have also expressed concerns about the United Kingdom's lack of economic competitiveness compared to its European neighbours, which in part they attribute to narrow specialisation in both the academic and the vocational fields, and to the lack of integration between them, resulting in low staying-on rates and high levels of wastage. A consensus has therefore developed that previous post-16 education and training has not worked either for many young people or in meeting the perceived need for a better skilled workforce (IPPR, 1990; Green, 1991; Hodkinson, 1991a; Smithers and

Robinson, 1991) because of the long-standing division between high status academic courses and low status vocational courses. This has resulted in growing calls for a single co-ordinated system of academic and vocational qualifications which will meet the needs of an advanced industrial society.

In response to such pressures the government, in the White paper *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (DES/DE, 1991), introduced General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) to complete post-16 education and training provision. They were intended to be a bridge between Advanced levels and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), and to provide a vocational education equivalent in status to A levels. They were also seen by some observers (e.g. Hodkinson and Mattinson, 1994; Spours, 1993a) as an attempt by the government to focus on the middle ground between right-wing groups (Marks, 1992) who wanted to retain A-levels essentially unchanged and its commitment to the development of NVQs as a basis for vocational training. Therefore recent government policy has been to broaden the vocational track.

Despite the introduction of vocational alternatives, however, many critics (e.g. FEU, 1992, 1993; Spours, 1995; Hodkinson , 1994; Holland, 1995) argue that unless A-level is reformed to allow flexibility and movement between the two tracks, academic qualifications will continue to dominate the post-16 scene in England and Wales, and their academic elitism will continue to devalue vocational rivals. Without such reforms, it is argued, A-levels will continue to be perceived as the passport to success, even though the risk of failure is daunting, so that history will repeat itself by reinforcing the message that vocational is second best, designed for those unable to cope with the academic track. Such perceptions amongst parents and students are also reinforced by the fact that with three good A-levels candidates have a 70 per cent chance of acceptance in

the long-established universities and makes the vocational alternatives seem more of a gamble.

2.3 Dearing Review of post-16 education and training

More recently, however, following growing criticism over the confusion caused by government policy on the provision of post-16 education and training, Sir Ron Dearing, chairman of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, was asked to review the framework of 16 - 19 qualifications and to make interim proposals to ministers in July 1995 with the production of a final report in April 1996. The interim recommendations (Dearing, 1995) included a single qualification authority, an advanced level national certificate encompassing A-levels and all vocational qualifications, fewer A-level syllabuses and greater flexibility for students to pick and mix courses or units from the full range of NVQs, GNVQs, AS and A-levels.

It came out against the political background of a failed leadership challenge by the right-wing of the conservative party, the merging of the education and employment departments and removal of cabinet members from the right of the party who would have opposed reforms in favour of a new Secretary of State for Education and Employment who is thought to favour a much greater mixing of the academic and vocational in line with her former Permanent Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Holland (Times Educational Supplement, 9 February, 1996). The report therefore argued that a new consensus had emerged across a wide range of professional organisations and the three main political parties, and that the climate was very different from when plans for a national diploma were first mooted by the government in 1991.

The amount of lengthy discussion in the second stage of the review (Dearing, 1996) reflected its inconclusive nature and attempts to accommodate views from right across the educational, industrial and political spectrum. Building on the interim report, the main recommendations were that students would be able to gain awards at entry, foundation, intermediate or advanced levels through any of the three main pathways: academic, applied and job-specific vocational courses. These would range from basic GCSE passes to A-level, including their vocational alternatives. It was claimed that the levels of clear comparability would allow students to combine elements from two or three pathways rather than gambling on one or other route at the outset.

The present AS-level would be revamped as the first half of A-level courses, taken in three modules. Broadly equivalent to Scottish Highers, the new AS (of which there was to be a vocational alternative) would encourage breadth and cut drop-out rates by giving students a short-term goal. Modularising A-levels in this way would also provide a bridge across the vocational/academic 'divide'. Concern over the rigour of modular A-level courses would be addressed by terminal assessment covering the whole course of study and worth at least 30 percent of the marks . It is also claimed that breadth is the aim of the new national general diploma which is to be in addition to the A-level route in which students would cover four areas of study (maths/science/technology; modern languages; arts and humanities; the 'world of work' including business and economics), some in depth as A-levels, GNVQs or NVQs, and others in less detail. In answer to the concerns over the burden of GNVQ assessment and its rigour, greater use of external assessments would be made (Smithers, 1993/1994).

A merger of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) with the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) was also proposed to

create a more coherent framework and attempt to bring academic and vocational pathways closer together. Overall the report envisaged three types of certificate systems: the current system; a national certificate rewarding the sort of achievement envisaged by the Employment Department in its national targets; a 'proto-baccalaureate' rewarding a set number of passes but specifying the subject areas to be covered. Dearing does not state his preference in all the proposals, preferring to leave it to 'the market' (or possibly a general election) to sort out. The lack of clarity in Dearing's report, in his attempt to give something to everybody, also reflects the fact that the review was hamstrung by political imperatives right from the start because of the government's brief that he was not to abolish or otherwise devalue the 'rigour' of A-level. Nor was he to introduce a baccalaureate as he claimed a single qualification would be skewed towards the academic to the detriment of those not included in academic study. Therefore the 'logical' conclusion of his drive for comparable standards and common material is that students should mix and match academic and vocational courses but this does not appear in the final report. An earlier proposal in the interim report for a single over-arching diploma, possibly looking too much like a baccalaureate, was therefore watered down to one of three parallel options. The report also reflects the fact that the influence of the A-level aficionados could not be underestimated.

2.4 Reforming the A-level Curriculum

In tracing the history of the debate for reforming the A-level curriculum, going back to the N and F proposals of 1978, Burchell (1992) identifies two broad sets of interests: those wishing to defend the academic A-level system and those concerned to broaden its scope. In describing such groups, she draws comparisons with Williams' (1961) typology of the interest groups concerned

with shaping the nature of the English and Welsh education system: the 'old humanists', 'industrial trainers' and the 'public educators'.

Burchell (1992) suggests that the elitist tradition of the 'old humanists' was strongly embodied in the rejection of the Higginson Report (DES, 1988a) which had among its aims the broadening of students' experience of A-level. Although the committee's remit was framed in the light of the government's commitment to retain GCE Advanced Level examinations as an essential means for setting standards of excellence, the report emphasised the need to see A-levels in the context of the whole of post-16 educational provision.

While acknowledging the need to maintain standards and academic rigour, and recognising that A-level is for students of a certain level of ability, the Higginson Report drew attention to the need to encourage more young people to stay in full-time education after 16 which was still being seen as the key problem, and to make their stay challenging, attractive and productive. It also felt that A-level examining gave too much credit to students' 'ability to memorise and recall facts and arguments', and too little to their capacity to 'exercise judgement, to reason, to stand on their own two feet, manage their own learning and think for themselves' (1988a: para. 2.4). The committee also recognised the need to balance the claims of society for a suitably educated work force and the needs and interests of individual students. It therefore recommended the following developments for A-level: factual content should be reduced so that the emphasis is placed on the development of higher level skills, such as analysis, the ability to see connections and differences and the capacity to understand facts and concepts; more active learning to increase students' motivation; more varied modes of assessment, including coursework and oral assessment, as well as end-of-course work tests; more informative reporting through profiles of student achievement and the fuller analysis of students' strengths and weaknesses on

their final certificates; attention to quality of opportunity and access for all potential A-level students.

The rejection of the committee's recommendations meant that the reform of academic examinations undertaken at the age of 18 had been postponed once more. The only developments that did emerge from the report were AS levels, which so far have met with little success in terms of numbers taking them and the rationalisation of A-level syllabuses.

Richardson (1993) also traces the influence of powerful interest groups, such as the Centre for Policy Studies and Headmasters' Conference (HMC) of independent schools, on the debate since 1989 following the rejection of the Higginson Report (DES, 1988). However he argues that the rejection of Higginson's proposals opened a 'reform floodgate': on the one side were the right-wing think tanks and on the other were the supporters of a British *Baccalaureate* . In July 1990 the Institute for Policy Research (IPPR, 1990) published a radical proposal for the abolition of A-levels in favour of a unitary 'advanced diploma' combining intellectual, practical and work-based learning. Richardson (1993: 11) suggests that the White Paper on 16-19 issues, *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (DES/DE, 1991) marked the end of the policy debate and policy implementation with the introduction of the GNVQ as a vocational alternative. It was also seen by some observers, as was discussed above, as an attempt by the government to steer the middle ground between right-wing groups who wanted to retain A-levels as a 'gold standard' and therefore essentially unchanged and its commitment to the development of an effective vocational provision so as to increase participation.

2.5 The development of vocational A-levels

With the retention of A levels in their present form, official policy (DES/DE, 1991, Dearing 1995, 1996) saw the new vocational provision as the main route for increasing participation. Advanced GNVQ qualifications were therefore created as high status technical/vocational alternatives to traditional A-level qualifications. Such 'vocational A-levels' are seen as having parity of esteem with traditional A-levels but belonging to the broader tradition of useful and applied knowledge which, as Jessup (1993) suggests, has persistently been seen as lacking the academic rigour and status of A-level. The future 'work activities' for those taking the vocational A-levels are expected to be non-routine, complex, and to demand 'considerable responsibility and autonomy' including occasions for 'controlling and guiding others' (NCVQ 1991: 4). The NCVQ framework also assumes that most of the workforce will be in this kind of employment. Therefore the new qualifications were designed to attract a much wider range of students into extended full-time education with different abilities and dispositions by offering them 'active forms of learning, and activities which they will perceive as relevant to their future needs' (NCVQ 1991: 25). GNVQs are therefore presented as 'encouraging students to work independently, use their initiative and make intelligent judgements about their work' because these are the skills employers and universities say they want and because such independent forms of learning are said to appeal to students discouraged by traditional teaching 'whose abilities would not otherwise be developed and recognised' (NVCQ 1994: 5 - 8).

Vocational A-levels are also meant to place 'technically-minded' and 'practically-minded' students on a basis of equality with their 'academic' contemporaries and by emphasising the application of knowledge to the highest levels of the labour market they therefore challenge the superiority traditionally accorded to

'knowledge for its own sake'. In other words, the occupations for which those with vocational A-levels are being prepared should be similar to those for which 'academic' students are heading, demanding developed capacities for taking responsibility, showing initiative, and solving problems by applying knowledge. Therefore in determining students' suitability for a course, teachers would guide students towards the pathway which best suited their preferred learning style or aptitudes rather than matching a student's general ability against the general academic demands associated with A-level.

2.6 Modes of teaching and learning in advanced academic and vocational courses

Against the background of such rhetoric surrounding the introduction of vocational alternatives is the assumption that there are differences in teaching and learning experiences across the two tracks. In the guide to GNVQ (Chorlton, 1994), the vocational alternative to A-level is presented as being more suited to the less academic, more practical, less desk-bound, more collaborative in its modes of learning and as being concerned with the application of skills and knowledge, whereas A-level is seen as requiring a high level of reading and writing skills and the ability to think analytically. They therefore appear to represent very different ways of organising, valuing, transmitting and assessing knowledge.

GNVQs are seen by many advocates (e.g. RSA, 1992; Jessup, 1993; Sutton, 1994 Green and Ainley, 1995) as being based on a philosophy of encouraging more young people to be responsible for their own learning through student-centred curriculum initiatives (i.e. shorter units of learning with clear assessment criteria; emphasis on skills and competences in the context of 'real' situations; a central role given to tutoring and guidance; systematic formative recording of personal

as well as educational achievement; opportunities for active, experiential learning; timetables negotiated on an individual basis).

However, Edwards (1995b) suggests such shifts from teaching to learning which are said to characterise vocational alternatives, and supposedly differentiate advanced GNVQ from its academic alternative, have also been a feature of recent developments in A-level syllabus design and assessment, particularly through the increasing use of coursework assessment. Such developments therefore suggest a convergence in modes of learning between the two tracks because of academic courses needing to develop 'qualities of mind' demanded by the labour market, and the need for 'transferable' skills in vocational courses in which the ability to gather, interpret and act on information is given priority (Hodkinson, 1989; Carr, 1993; Hyland, 1993; Lewis, 1994). This argument is also supported by recent ALIS evidence on students' perceived learning activities in both A-level and BTEC/GNVQ courses (Lacy and Fitz-Gibbon, 1993; Fitz-Gibbon and Wright, 1995) and from classroom observations (Edwards, Fitz-Gibbon, Haywood and Meagher, 1996) which show that while GNVQ courses tend towards activities associated with 'vocational' education, A-level courses are equally divided between the activities associated with the 'academic' and those on the other side of the traditional divide . Similarly, while the research indicated a wider range of learning activities (e.g. using IT, researching topics, preparing assignments, working in pairs and groups) in GNVQ/BTEC classes consistent with the vocational philosophy discussed above, the evidence suggested that there was less significant difference between academic and vocational courses in terms of teacher questioning, teacher exposition or teacher-directed notes. Also within the traditional academic subjects, there were differences in how the teaching and learning was organised.

2.7 Developments in modes of teaching and learning at A-level

Spours (1993b) suggests that the period from 1985 to 1990 saw a noticeable experimentation within the academic track through the development of GCSE, the impact and extension of Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) curriculum development projects, a growth of modular A-levels and AS and a slow but marked increase in the coursework component of many A-levels (e.g.*The Wessex Project*, Rainbow 1993). Such developments were also seen as a major feature of 'alternative' A-level English literature syllabuses which allowed up to 50 percent coursework assessment (Greenwell, 1988). However, despite such 'creeping modernisation' (Higham *et al*, 1996: 53), Edwards (1995b) argues that the changes to A-level should not be overstated as it remains essentially what it was when it replaced the similarly structured Higher School Certificate in 1951: a very few subjects studied separately and in depth, then formally and separately examined at the end of two years. This is reflected in the fact that nearly two-thirds of 1996 A-level entries were in the same ten subjects which predominated forty years earlier in the sixth forms of grammar schools.

Through such developments at A and AS level, reformers hoped that the narrowness of the subject matter at A-level could be broadened to create greater breadth and a wider range of teaching and learning styles beyond didactic instruction, which allowed students to take considerable responsibility for their own learning, to do more of their own thinking and to develop problem solving skills and self reliance. This would involve less teacher direction and more student initiative, thereby creating opportunities for students to 'explore and formulate ideas instead of merely listening to those of the teacher' and to 'engage in extended conversation and discussion' (DES, 1987b: 24 - 27 and 1988b: 29). As will be discussed in more detail in section 2.10, such accounts of teacher/student interaction and discussion figure prominently in HMI descriptions of 'good

practice' in A-level teaching. Such innovations at A-level were also seen as bridging the 'academic-vocational' divide by enabling students to take modules from equivalent vocational qualifications, such as the links between BTEC and A/AS levels, thereby promoting common learning processes between the two tracks.

However, such developments have been severely hampered by the government's decision in 1993, following pressure from the educational Right (North, 1987; Norcross, 1990) to restrict coursework to 20 percent in the case of most A-levels so as to ensure a return to traditional forms of assessment for first examination in 1996. Coursework assessment was seen by the educational Right as reflecting a progressive-egalitarian position with a distaste for real learning, whereas A-level as the 'gold standard', assessed through traditional examinations, was seen as a way of preserving 'traditional learning' taught through subjects by teachers who are an 'authority with knowledge to impart to uneducated minds' (O'Hear 1991a: 8). Such a decision was regarded by educationalists as a retrograde step and an ideological and political decision because it equates educational qualifications with the selection of an elite as a way of maintaining 'standards' and further undermines the vocational track.

Such developments in the academic track could also explain the 'confusion' over the inspecting and reporting of the academic and vocational tracks. As Edwards (1995b) points out, HMI models of 'good practice' in both A-level (DES, 1987) and vocational (HMI, 1991; OFSTED, 1993a) courses do not differ: the descriptions of good practice on both sides of the 'divide' include investigative or practical activity either individually or in groups with students taking responsibility for their own learning and developing the ability to work independently and to be self-critical; in contrast poor teaching is described as being too teacher-centred,

involves too much lecturing and too many dictated notes and makes insufficient demands on the students' own thinking.

Edwards suggests 'good' practice might be expected to vary in the extent to which reference is made to the 'world of work', problem-solving is directed at 'real' problems, and learning is 'practical'. He suggests it might reflect the extent to which educational progressivism and vocational progressivism have come together, in pursuit of different objectives but with the effect of producing a convergence of practices. As will be discussed in section 2.10, many commentators claim this is reflected in 'alternative' A-level English literature syllabuses, and particularly in the English language syllabuses, which have been influenced by the language and practices normally associated with the design of vocational A-level courses such as modularisation and coursework.

2.8 Subject pedagogy

In discussing possible differences in the way academic and vocational courses are taught, Edwards (1995a), drawing on Bernstein's (1990) theoretical work, suggests the most salient difference may be the way in which the knowledge is organised and assessed . He argues that the A-level curriculum is traditionally seen as being contained within strongly marked subject boundaries or classifications in which learning is valued for its own sake so that the self-referential nature of academic subjects deliberately disembeds the specialised knowledge from everyday life and presents them as part of different and distinctive orders of meaning and relevance. Academic knowledge is therefore seen as propositional knowledge within a particular subject discipline which has its own established content and working practices and A-level represents both a curriculum and examination built on separate academic subjects. As Becher (1987) suggests, each subject discipline has its own specialised discourse and

code of practices which mark it off from the working practices of other subjects and from 'commonsense'.

Bernstein (1990) discusses how the organisation of knowledge into subject disciplines brings with it authoritative styles of teaching where the relationship between transmitters and acquirers is described as being 'essentially and intrinsically' asymmetrical. However, he also argues that weakly classified knowledge, as in the case of 'applied' GNVQ, does not necessarily lead to a weakening of this authoritative relationship. He uses the term 'framing' to describe this form of pedagogic relationship whereby, within the hierarchical structure, the teacher determines what is being learned, in how much time and in what sequence, and how the learning is to be appropriately displayed. Edwards (1991/1995a) relates Bernstein's theoretical perspective to the large body of classroom research into classroom discourse, discussed in Chapter 3, which reveals the very unequal rights of participation to pedagogic discourse and shows students being 'positioned' in ways which confine their contribution within the teacher's frame of reference. Edwards (1995a) also suggests Bernstein's theoretical framework is a valuable heuristic for studying the post-16 context where many commentators assume the introduction of vocational alternatives at A-level has led to a weakening in subject boundaries and the way in which knowledge is framed and therefore has relevance to the current study.

Traditionally A-level has been seen as a preparation for further study in the subject at university, thereby acting as an initiation into academic practices. Even the subjects of study have changed little since their introduction in 1951 when they were taken by 3 percent of the age group and where 80 percent of the entries were in traditional grammar school subjects (English, history, geography, French, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology), plus the innovation of economics, taught separately by academic specialists. In 1993 when A levels were being

taken by 33 percent of the age group, that figure (excluding General Studies) was still 70 percent with 'new' subjects like technology, business studies and computer studies still making up only 7 percent of entries.

The domination of traditional subjects at A-level therefore suggests that the teacher acts as an expert custodian and mediator of a specialized body of knowledge and specialised working practices with the student acting as what Edwards (1995a) calls a 'cultural apprentice'. Similarly, Young (1992: 90) uses the metaphor of the 'traveller in a strange land' in which the student is attempting to learn its and customs and language where deviations may be tolerated (as in student-centred approaches) or rigid adherence to the pathways insisted upon until the language is spoken fluently (as in didactic approaches).

However, in the rhetoric about 'sixth-form' teaching, going back to the already nostalgic image of the 'intellectual discipleship' of the Crowther Report (1959: 222 - 225) where 'subject-minded' students have a 'special devotion to a particular branch of study' introduced through the mediating influence of a specialist teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm, it is assumed that on the route to 'mastery' of an academic craft there must be increasing opportunities to display a growing acquisition of the skills in specialised speech and writing (Sheeran and Barnes 1991) and to demonstrate them without close direction. Therefore in Crowther's idealised portrait, the ability and maturity of sixth formers meant that teachers could rely on students' readiness for 'independent work' at a stage when close supervision was considered inappropriate as a preparation for higher education. From this perspective it could be assumed that a progressively more symmetrical pedagogic relationship, or weaker framing, would develop as the 'subject minded' students are progressively socialised by scholarly teachers into the working practices of their chosen subject. It also assumes that A-level carried with it the right to question and to introduce alternative frames into the classroom discourse in which students would play an active part.

However, for traditionalists from the educational right like O'Hear (1991a: 20) there is an insistence that students must 'submit to the habits of the discipline before they achieve liberation through mastery' rather than criticise 'the received notions and methodologies of a subject' after only a brief introduction, because 'until the self is situated within a cultural tradition there is nothing to explore, no direction to any discovery, and nothing to express or articulate'. Such 'democratic' practices he argues betray the 'standards of intellectual integrity laboriously worked out in the history of the separate disciplines' (34). Edwards (1995b), however, challenges his analysis on the grounds that if most teaching is undemocratic because of a teacher's expertise or authority in a subject, it raises the dilemma of at what stage in the learning process the student earns the right to question.

Edwards goes on to suggest that for most teachers A-level is regarded as a substantial induction into an academic discipline in which the right to question and challenge is regarded as a necessary part of the learning process, particularly for students with an enquiring mind who will go on to achieve the higher grades. In English literature this might be to demonstrate independence of thought and a personal voice in response to the student's reading. Over-didactic teaching could, therefore, be regarded as an inappropriate method for inducting able students into the ways of the subject unless the teacher continues to model critical approaches to texts. Such criticisms of the preparation of high ability candidates for A-level English literature examinations are a regular feature of chief examiners' annual reports (Canwell and Ogborn, 1994).

In contrast to the traditional subject specialisms of A-level, vocational A-levels are seen to involve 'new study combinations' or 'schemes' or 'programmes' of study. They represent studies explicitly related to occupational areas, and the

emphasis on applying knowledge is explicit. The importance of subject knowledge is therefore subordinated to 'practical problems' so that the boundaries between 'school knowledge' and 'everyday knowledge' are deliberately blurred as they are more relevant to an 'innovation culture' (FEU 1992). The combinations are created by analysing the knowledge, skills and understanding in preparation for employment within an occupational area so that traditional boundaries around subject knowledge are blurred and 'work-related and/or work-based problems' and 'real-life experiences' are addressed (BTEC Policy Handbook).

Such a radical departure from traditional subjects at A-level is seen by its advocates (e.g. Jessup, 1991,1993; Hodkinson, 1994; Sutton, 1994) as having potentially far-reaching effects on post-16 teaching and learning. Modularisation of vocational courses, which was central to TVEI and other curricular reforms in secondary schools (Watkins 1987), means that a subject can be broken down into manageable units while still giving it coherence. Subject matter is also selected on grounds of relevance and usefulness beyond the subject itself, for example to the world of work and citizenship, so that in Bernstein's (1990: 63) terms they represent weaker subject classifications where knowledge is 'regionalised' into areas of application.

Vocational A-levels are therefore not seen as being self-contained and self-referential in the same way as traditional subject-based A-levels. Such developments, according to HMI (1991: ix) were seen in 'the more practical, applied and relevant' focus of the Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiative (TVEI) which they claim produced a shift in teaching styles 'away from abstract and theoretical approaches towards more practical work and other forms of practical participation'. More active forms of learning are therefore considered to be appropriate to vocational forms of learning where there is less

dependence on the teacher's knowledge because the subject knowledge is related to everyday experience rather than abstract forms of knowledge as in academic subjects. In other words, the more that is done according to the tenets of a particular subject discipline, the more dependent the student is on the authority of the teacher as the source of authoritative definitions of disciplinary relevance, hence the appeal of A-level to what Ball (1995) calls the 'cultural restorationists' as the last bastion of such forms of teaching.

For the radical Right, vocationalism and its 'technicist' preoccupation with the supposed needs of employment are a main source of the intellectual crisis rooted in the subversion of subjects and the consequent undermining of properly authoritative teaching (O'Keeffe 1990; Pilkington, 1991; O'Hear 1991a). Any weakening of subject boundaries according to this perspective will lead to a loss of academic authority and with it the discipline which a subject brings, guarding against the indoctrination of students by teachers with their own beliefs and constraining with real knowledge the scope students might have for opinionated vaguenesss and easy going discussion (Hillgate Group, 1987; O'Hear, 1987, 1991a). Even apparently academic 'studies' such as business or computing are seen from this perspective as being fatally flawed by the lack of established ways of knowing and finding out which 'traditional subjects' are seen to embody. O'Hear (1991b) therefore presents 'real' teaching as being a justifiably undemocratic process because the relationship of the relatively knowledgeable and the relatively ignorant must remain fundamentally unequal.

2.9 Assessment practices

For the educational Right, therefore, subject boundaries provide clearly established and authoritative criteria of relevance and correctness. Any weakening of subject boundaries will result in a large loss of pedagogic

authority of the teacher as an 'authority with knowledge to impart to uneducated minds' (O'Hear 1991b: 8). Similarly such subjects can only be objectively assessed through traditional examinations which allow for a substantial test of knowledge and understanding. Such a view partly explains the ferocity of the educational right's attack on coursework moderation, particularly at GCSE (North, 1990; Norcross, 1990), for undermining academic standards. Coursework assessment in GCSE was seen to reflect a progressive-egalitarian position with a distaste for real learning. Therefore the defence of A-level as the 'gold standard' of secondary education was seen as essential by defenders of 'traditional learning'. Such attacks have resulted, as discussed earlier, in ministerial and prime ministerial interventions to restrict the use of coursework at GCSE and A-level with a return to traditional forms of examining.

However, the Higginson Report (DES, 1988a: par, 3.2) criticised A-level examining for persistently giving too much emphasis to factual recall because of the content overloading of syllabuses, thereby failing to reward higher-order skills or promote understanding, and to 'provide illustrations and comparisons to connect with the experiences of young people'. Like other critics of A-level (Jessup, 1991, Spoors 1993), Higginson also criticised the reliance on terminal examinations because they encouraged question spotting in an attempt to avoid complete coverage of the syllabus thereby undermining intellectual effort. Summative single grades were also criticised because they provided no information about different aspects of a student's performance.

The educational Right's defence of, and recent influence on the reintroduction of, externally assessed terminal examinations at A-level contrasts with the 'vocational progressivism' embodied in GNVQ which places more responsibility on students for accumulating and collecting portfolios of evidence of achievement, through a reliance on coursework, based on explicit criteria

covering areas of knowledge which are made known to students before they embark upon their studies. Students are thereby given greater control over the pacing of their work by being told what is to be learned and how the learning is to be demonstrated, so as to demystify the assessment process. Such a condition is seen as necessary for students to take responsibility for their own learning which GNVQ is claimed to embody.

While GNVQs can be seen as being innovative in their assessment processes, there is a risk of underestimating the innovations that have taken place in A-level subjects like English where 'alternative' syllabuses have allowed coursework assessment to play a substantial role (Harrison and Mountford, 1992; Canwell and Ogborn, 1994). In the case of A-level English teaching, which is the main focus of the current study, the picture is further complicated by the introduction of different formulations of the subject such as English language, communication studies and media studies, which many commentators see as bringing about a major shift in ideology, pedagogy and assessment and therefore bridging the vocational/academic divide. While English literature is seen as being a 'real' subject drawing on a traditional canon of literature with its own 'internal' criteria of relevance and worth, the new versions of English are regarded by commentators as being 'hybrid' subjects drawing on new fields of media, cultural and linguistic study. They are therefore seen as addressing the vocational and personal needs of those students who do consider themselves as 'academic' (McCullogh *et al*, 1993). Such issues and developments will be explored in the next section.

2.10 A-Level English Literature teaching: pressures for change

Having reviewed the pressures for change to A-level within the general post-16 educational context, and in order to further contextualise the current study, the

next four sections will explore the debate about the nature of English studies that has taken place within higher and secondary education and the influence this has had on the teaching of A-level English. In particular, it will consider the challenge to the literary domination of the A-level English curriculum which has come from the development of communication, media and English language studies at A-level and from a reconstruction of the subject in higher and secondary education.

Since the introduction of GCE A-level examinations in 1951, English literature has dominated post-16 English teaching and proved to be one of the most popular subjects at this level. Its critics, however, including HMI (DES, 1987), suggest that it has changed little in that time and that in its critical practices it still reflects its grammar school sixth form origins. Scott (1989) and Leach (1992), for example, argue that in its critical ideology A-level English literature is the last bastion of Leavisite values. Such values are based on the work of the Cambridge literary critic F. R. Leavis who believed in the civilising influence of English studies in which the moral dimensions of a literary text selected from a traditional canon of English writers are emphasised.

Scott (1989: 24) goes on to suggest that examinations in English literature exist not to foster critical enquiry and a personal response on the part of the student, but to initiate candidates into conventions of literary criticism through a 'rag-bag of literary tricks and devices'. Matters of literary technique and values are the main preoccupation in the study of literary texts which become self-referential, capable of being studied without reference to anything else, such as the historical and social context in which they were written. According to Scott (1989: 27), even when modern texts are selected for study they 'continue to isolate literature as a special case, capable of being studied without reference to anything else' as a kind of academic study which 'quarantines whole areas of intellectual enquiry'.

They therefore represent an extreme form of academic self-referencing. The role of the teacher, therefore, is to act as an expert unlocking the meanings and dispensing authoritative interpretations of the literary texts; the authority of the teacher being increased by the authority of the text. Such knowledge is then examined through the critical literary essay written in response to A-level questions posing authoritative statements about values and literary techniques for comment.

Leach (1992) argues that this approach draws on a 'classic realist' critical position, in which the text is seen as a fixed entity with the author controlling the text and all its meanings; therefore the teacher's task is to unlock the meanings for students. This in turn encourages a 'traditional' range of classroom techniques which includes: students in desks, teacher at the front in the position of power and purveyor of wisdom, knowledge and information, line-by-line examination and explication of the text involving complex explanation of words and phrases, followed by essays which are expected to take on acceptable critical stances.

Such styles of A-level English teaching were criticised by HMI (DES, 1986: 8): in their survey of the teaching of A-level English literature, they found 'a considerable amount of teacher-monologue in evidence' and questioning techniques which 'were sometimes narrow or obscure, with a preconceived notion of the 'correct' answer'. In making such judgements, they based their criteria for inspection on a Common Core A-level document agreed by all GCE examining boards in 1983 with the stated aim of the examination being 'To encourage an enjoyment and appreciation of English literature based on an informed personal response and to extend this appreciation where it has already been acquired' so that students are enabled 'to make enthusiastic, informed, independent and personal responses to texts' (DES, 1986: 3). With this notion of

'good practice' in mind they went on to criticise teaching which took place in 'the constant shadow of the examination' leading to a narrow concentration on the short literary essay and context questions to the exclusion of other activities which had the effect of 'shrouding the vitality of literature in an air of gloomy retribution'. Because of teachers' and students' preoccupation with the requirements of the examination, HMI found this led to 'a packaging of ideas to please, rather than the careful articulation of thought and feeling' (DES, 1986: 10).

In order to encourage direct engagement with texts and a personal response, HMI suggested that a range of writing tasks and opportunities to discuss and think independently be made available to the students through the use of coursework. They also advocated a more reflexive approach to what the students were learning by encouraging them to 'engage in extended conversation and discussion' (DES, 1986: 8) so as to promote personal responses to texts. This is illustrated in the following vignette taken from the report in which an A-level literature class were studying the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*

> 'The students were required to define the character's attributes in an attempt to identify certain themes. The lecturer skilfully analysed the responses in the light of generally accepted definitions of the characters and made the students justify their opinions...Students displayed excellent skills in analysing the text and interpreting Chaucerian terminology' (DES, 1986: 27)'.

Such views from HMI reflect that, until their reform in 1992 through the creation of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), they were regarded by the educational Right (e.g. O'Hear, 1991a) as licensed progressives, hence the abuse that was directed at them.

In response to such criticisms, from the mid-1970s examination boards introduced experimental syllabuses with elements of coursework and open book assessment which by the early 1990s allowed up to 50 percent coursework (e.g. AEB 660, JMB syllabus C). Greenwell (1988) estimates that between 1981 and 1985 the proportion of candidates including an 'alternative' element in their syllabus doubled so that in 1985 10 percent of A-level English students were following such 'alternative' syllabuses, and that the percentage has doubled again since then. Greenwell warned, however, against seeing these 'alternative' syllabuses as being radical departures from, and eschewing the kinds of approaches traditionally associated with, the examination of English at this level. He argued that because at that stage they only allowed 30 percent coursework assessment they were otherwise identical to the traditional syllabuses in terms of the phrasing of questions and the kind of essay work they envisaged.

Other commentators suggested, however, (e.g. Adams and Hopkins, 1981; Hackman, 1990; Ogborn,1990; Buckroyd and Ogborn, 1992; Harrison and Mountford, 1992; Bleiman, 1993; McCulloch *et al*, 1993; Canwell and Ogborn, 1994) that such new methods of assessment allowed for new approaches and methodologies at A-level. Hackman (1990), for example, argues that whereas timed examinations pushed students into instant definitive readings, coursework and 'open' text examinations allowed scope for reflection and negotiation of meaning thereby encouraging an active critical reflection by the student. Similarly Brown and Gifford (1989) and Peim (1993) suggest that critical theory was influencing such developments by challenging the notion of an authoritative reading of a text, thereby bringing about a change in pedagogy by encouraging teachers to move beyond the role of the expert to that of enabler, supporter and challenger.

Most importantly, according to Ogborn (1990: 16) these 'new' approaches to the study of English literature lead to an understanding that 'any critic is expressing only a partial and incomplete reading, however authoritative it might seem'. She argues it brings with it a fundamental change in teaching and learning styles in the A-level classroom because of a move away from transmission teaching, where meanings in texts are seen as fixed and the teacher acts as custodian of, and inductor into, established knowledge, towards an approach view in which textual meanings are more volatile and diverse and formed by the interaction of reader, text and cultural context. In this model, the teacher is helping students towards independent literacy where critical interpretation is encouraged.

Harrison and Mountford (1992), McCulloch *et al* (1993) and Canwell and Ogborn (1994) also argue that coursework can allow for a more student-centred approach through flexible, active and independent forms of learning. No longer is it appropriate for students to absorb the received wisdom about a text for a timed examination. Rather they are required to set their own tasks and goals for assignments in negotiation with their teachers, to follow up their studies with original research and wider reading and to develop their own critical thinking. Such a shift in perspective means, according to Harrison and Mountford (1992: 198), that the emphasis is put on the 'student learner' backed by the 'teacher enabler' rather than a teacher dispensing knowledge, therefore leading to an 'exciting variety of patterns of learning and teaching'.

However, Harrison and Mountford (1992: 201 - 203) caution against the suggestion that coursework forms of assessment will necessarily lead to changes in pedagogy. In their case study of a sixth form college and an 11 - 18 comprehensive school they found a range of teaching and learning styles, from classrooms where 'patterns of consultation and guided learning' were in full operation to classrooms where there was a 'boxed-in curriculum with didactic

delivery from the teacher-as-transmitter of essentially non-negotiable knowledge'. Although there was a clustering towards the 'consultative' end, they illustrate their argument with an example of a teacher where 'modern ideas on the deconstruction of text were made strangely dreary through an over dependence on direct teaching from the front'.

Similarly, Millard (1988) questions the view that new theoretical positions introduced and developed by teachers from more theoretically based university courses will necessarily lead to changes in the teaching of English at A-level as suggested by Peim (1986, 1993). She argues that new theoretical positions can promote even more teacher-led material than traditional critical approaches because the new critical vocabulary employed is even less accessible to sixth formers. Despite the wide divergence in theory, each seeks to impose a set of judgements on its students by offering a ready-made grid to lay over the text in order to shape the reading. Millard (1988: 9) suggests both are content bound: in the traditional approach the literary text dominates, in the other it is the theoretical position. There is, therefore, a 'tyranny of taste' as much at work in the new model as in the old one and she argues that it is crucial that teachers develop teaching strategies where students are encouraged to explore and challenge and make meanings for themselves.

2.11 Alternatives to English Literature in the A-level English Curriculum

Despite such innovations, however, many commentators (e.g. Scott, 1990; Jones, 1992a; Blue, 1995; Keith, n.d) argued that A-level English literature did not offer sufficient scope for new approaches to the study of literary and non-literary texts which had developed in higher education and that it failed to meet the vocational, personal and social needs of most students, particularly of the vast majority who do not go on to read English at university. They argued that all the

'alternative' syllabuses did was provide an opportunity to teach English literature in a more efficient way while achieving quite conventional goals of literary criticism. However, the new versions of post-16 English, such as communication studies, media studies and English language, were seen as challenging the ideology of traditional English literature syllabuses and going some way towards recognising students' vocational and personal needs as part of the mainstream curriculum. They were therefore seen as representing a significant innovation in the A-level English curriculum.

Criticisms of traditional approaches to A-level English literature had strongly influenced the work of the Schools Council *English 16-19* project which ran from 1975 till 1978 (Dixon, 1979) and which set out to investigate the content and style of English teaching post-16 including teaching in colleges of further education as well as the more traditional sixth form. The project soon turned its attention to examination syllabuses which it saw as the prime determinant of both traditional practice and innovation in the A-level English curriculum and called for advanced qualifications in English which allowed for broad academic and vocational interests and which served not only the needs of higher education but also students' vocational, personal and social needs. It therefore advocated the introduction of a broad-based English A-level which included the analytical study of language and the way it is used.

Arguments for reforming post-16 English so that it included 'a systematic study of the language' were first put forward in the Lockwood Report (1964) and taken-up by the Schools Council English 16-19 project. Because of the changing composition of post-16 students in schools and further education colleges, and the need to improve staying on rates, a unified structure of education and training for the whole age group was advocated with a central core but different academic pathways. Therefore the School Council English 16-19 project called

for advanced qualifications in English which allowed for broad academic and vocational interests. Because of the popularity of A-level English literature, it was felt that it should be the first to undergo such changes so as to produce syllabuses that would assess competence in English 'that would be valuable in higher education, in a vocation, and also in social and personal life' (Dixon, 1979: 29).

Proposals for syllabuses which contained a strong language element covering a wide range of language purposes and usage were put forward to allow for a broader A-level English, and from the mid-1970s some English literature syllabuses were starting to introduce a language element and allow for written coursework assessment. Dixon (1979) saw the AEB A-level in communication studies which started in 1976 as a model for the broadening of A-level English in which the social and vocational uses of language and other modes of communication were given a central place, and which built in coursework moderation alongside traditional examinations. This was seen as allowing for practical, analytical investigations of language in use through coursework and case studies; it was also envisaged that such developments would set up demands for changes in teaching and learning through more active forms of learning.

In 1976, an A-level communications studies was established which recognised the importance of the media and the language of the media. According to many commentators (e.g. Adams and Hopkin, 1981; Dixon, 1979; Limb, 1986; McCulloch *et al*, 1993; Blue, 1995) it introduced a strong 'vocational' orientation because it was originally designed mainly by teachers from the further education sector whose experience was strongly vocational. Therefore it had a language element with an emphasis on practical work and analytical investigation and was the closest a student could come to A-level English language at that stage. It also made use of a range of assessment procedures which included coursework and

case studies as well as terminal examinations. Such developments, according to Dixon, (1979) and Adams and Hopkin (1981), allowed for the introduction of more flexible, student-centred forms of learning and assessment and, as discussed in section 2.5, have become associated with vocational alternatives to A-level. They suggest the new A-level in communication studies represented a move away from the traditional view of education for 16-19 year olds as the imparting of already existing knowledge handed down from one generation to the next and examined in a three-hour paper, to a notion of knowledge as something dynamic, something that grows in the interchange and engagement of student, teacher and task.

However, it was not until the mid-1980s that separate English language syllabuses were established by the London Board (1983) and the Joint Matriculation Board (1985) which drew on the academic study of sociolinguistics and allowed more scope for students' 'everyday' knowledge and experience. The stated aim of the two new A-level English language syllabuses was to give the subject its own academic identity and to adopt methods of study and assessment that would not only have a vocational aspect but also embody new academic approaches to the study of language. The success of the two new syllabuses is reflected in the fact that by 1993, Hooper (1995) reports, around 11 percent of the London Board's A-level English candidates sat the language option rather than the English literature. Similarly by 1995, NEAB A-level English language was taken by 10,000 students from an original entry of 209 students in 1985.

The addition of English language to the A-level English curriculum was seen as answering the concerns of those teachers who had come to feel that the new communication studies syllabus did not go far enough in offering the sort of advanced study of language that they felt was needed. Print media were only one of many concerns and language use had to take its place among media

technology and the study of social ideologies. It was also seen as giving a more adequate description of the nature and functions of verbal language.

Also, according to its advocates (Bennison and Spicer, 1988; Scott, 1989; Keith, 1990a/1990b; Whiteley, 1988/1990, Jones, 1992a; Benton, 1995; Blue, 1995, Brumfit, 1995), the study of English language at A-level was seen as fundamentally challenging the ideology of the traditional English literature course because it removed its special status: literature was itself a variety of language, one discourse among many and any form of spoken or written form of discourse from the world outside the classroom is seen as worthy of study and analysis. It therefore includes the study of media and non-literary texts as well as the students' own writing and offered students opportunities to explore their own readings and the possibility of plural readings as well as studying a text's means of production and its historical and social context.

A-level English language was therefore seen as bringing about change in the content and style of post-16 English teaching and, more especially, in styles of learning. As a result, A-level English language is said to go some way towards recognising the vocational and personal needs of students because of its concern for giving them the tools to analyse and understand the manipulation of language and to develop their proficiency in language use. Therefore A-level English language is seen as part of the post-16 curriculum, serving a wider range of ability and not simply as preparation for higher education serving a tiny minority of students (4 percent according to Adams and Hopkin in 1980 and 10 percent in the HMI survey of A-level English literature in 1986) who go on to read degrees with English as a major component.

Scott (1989) suggests clear differences in pedagogy are emerging from the English Language syllabuses which go beyond the superficial changes in English

Literature syllabuses and which recognise new notions of text and context along with important differences between speech and writing and questions about the value of literary texts. Goddard (1993) also argues that A-level English language brings with it a distinctive pedagogy because the investigation of language is at the core of the whole course. This demands adopting more of a 'scientific' approach, in which students focus from the outset on what investigation means, allowing them to develop their research skills and knowledge by regularly working on rich data which raise interesting and varied questions about language and thereby encourage active learning. Therefore the investigational, independent and collaborative forms of learning which are now associated with GNVQ courses were also seen as underpinning the teaching of A-level English language.

2.12 English studies in higher education

The developments at A-level also reflect the general debate about the nature and purposes of English teaching in higher education in the previous twenty years. Since the 1970s, the identity of 'English' as a subject and the domination of English studies by the study of literature was being challenged in higher education. Various commentators (e.g. Williams, 1983; Doyle, 1989; Dixon, 1991; Easthope, 1991; Evans, 1993; Peim, 1993; Blue, 1995) discuss how, throughout this period, there had been an epistemological revolution through a questioning of what can and cannot be counted as 'English'. English studies has seen the introduction of a whole plethora of 'critical' and 'theoretical' approaches to literature through a massive importation into academic English studies of theories and methods otherwise associated with structuralism, sociolinguistics, semiology, marxism, feminism, post structuralism and constructivism.

Belsey (1980), for example, discusses critical and interpretative approaches to the study of English which offer radical alternatives to the understanding of text and which allow for social, political and cultural analysis. Eagleton (1983; 1984; 1985; 1990) also discusses how the subject is in disarray in academia because of the challenge to the cultural and academic establishments' definition of the traditional literary canon and its role and function in society, and to their traditional critical practices from contemporary critical theory. Traditional approaches to the study of 'English' have often meant that the social, ideological and political dimensions of language and textuality have been excluded if not negated. Eagleton therefore argues that the new critical approaches place the study of language and literature within a broader social, historical and ideological context and thereby challenge the Englishness of the literary tradition.

Doyle (1989) argues that the growth of communication departments, particularly in the 'new' universities, has also led to a significant reconsideration of what constitutes a text, moving beyond the pure study of literary texts, so that 'English' has been reconstituted as a cultural or social semiotic study. Alongside these developments, he argues that new methodologies have been developed, more democratic in style, with shift from 'authoritative monologue' to 'open ended conversation' through seminar-based work.

Firth (1990) suggests that up to the 1960s there was always a close relationship between the study of English literature in universities and the teaching of English in schools because of its civilising mission and sense of a 'common culture' which spread through the educational system downwards. In practical terms this meant that the teaching of English in universities was very important in the training of teachers as many English graduates went into teaching, and until recently there was relatively little difference between university and sixth-form

English teachers in terms of pedagogical practice. Similarly there was relatively little difference between what was studied at school and university as the same texts were selected from a shared canon with similar terms and methods of textual analysis applied to them.

This sense of a shared purpose and status started, however, to break down, according to Firth, in the 1960s because of the 'over-academicisation' of the university. English studies saw the development of a variety of literary specialisms and a turning away from criticism in Leavisite terms, where the study of literature was an exercise in value judgement. This culminated in the 1980s, as discussed earlier, in the emergence of self-conscious 'literary theorists' and the introduction of a whole plethora of critical and theoretical approaches to literature (e.g. structuralism, linguistics, semiotics, sociology, marxism, feminism, and post-structuralism).

In the same period, largely as a result of the Chomskyan revolution (Smith and Wilson, 1979), linguistics moved from being an esoteric and highly specialist area of study, to one which seemed to offer insights into a whole range of fields of intellectual endeavour. The study of language began to offer new insights not only into language itself but into the understanding of the human mind and human society. It also began to impinge on the study of literature itself, directly through the concept of stylistics and indirectly through the role of linguistics as one major source of the structuralist movement. Such developments in the field of linguistics therefore added to the questioning of what can or cannot be counted as 'English' and to a significant reconsideration of what constitutes a text, moving beyond the pure study of literary texts, so that 'English' has been reconstituted as a cultural or social semiotic study (e.g. Hodge and Kress, 1988, Kress, 1989). A-level English language is therefore said to draw on these new areas of study for its theoretical underpinning, bringing about a shift in subject

ideology in the post-16 English curriculum. Pressures for change to the A-level English curriculum were also being felt lower down in the secondary English curriculum.

2.13 English studies in secondary education

Keith (1990a), Freeborn (1992) and Hudson (1994) consider that the introduction of A-level English language promoted knowledge about language and in the process gave many teachers of both English language and literature a new lease of life. They suggest that much of what is taught at A-level is also influencing teachers' work on language lower down the age range as teachers found that topics they covered with A-level students could be easily adapted for worthwhile use with younger students. This, they argue, was given new impetus with the introduction of the National Curriculum with its emphasis on knowledge about language and the subsequent Language in the National Curriculum project (LINC) (Carter 1990) designed to train teachers in teaching about language. According to Keith 1990a, it gave to A-level English language teachers a new authority in linguistic matters as the only recent and relevant experience had by historical accident been acquired in the 16 to 19 curriculum and A-level teachers had no difficulty in implementing a new emphasis on knowledge about language lower down the age range. Keith also suggests the LINC programme was able to benefit considerably from the A-level model and from a range of classroom experience in applying knowledge about language to texts, data and human behaviour. In return the introduction of explicit language study by the National Curriculum has influenced the teaching of English at A-level giving it more status as an A-level subject and rescuing it from the rather disembodied position that it held in a literature dominated English curriculum. Similarly, Carter (1993) argues that the rapid development of English Language A-level courses has laid a strong basis for language study in schools at all levels.

Throughout the 1980s many commentators (e.g. Hudson, 1994; Mitchell, 1995, Davies, 1996; Knight, 1996) suggest that changes introduced into the secondary English curriculum brought about a shift in paradigm by putting a greater emphasis on the study of language and the media. Change was first signalled in the HMI Report, *English 5-16* (DES, 1984) which attempted to move 'English' away from the generally literary focus of the liberal tradition reflected in the Bullock Report (DES, 1975). This culminated in the original proposals for English in the National Curriculum for England and Wales (DES 1989) which placed an increased demand on English teachers to promote a greater knowledge about language, including the teaching of grammar across a range of literary, non-literary and media texts.

In discussing the aims of English teaching, the Cox Report (DES 1989) attempted to define the role of English in the curriculum in order for it to take its place as a core element in the National Curriculum for England and Wales following on from a series of government and HMI reports - e.g. Bullock, DES, (1975); English From 5 to 16 (DES, 1984); Kingman (DES, 1988b). Drawing on the literature of the history of English teaching in England, it defined five main 'views' of the subject: 'cultural heritage' (the study of high culture, especially canonical English literature and still embodied in its study at A-level); 'cultural analysis' (the linguistic and social analysis of a range of cultural artefacts, ranging from popular fiction to canonical poetry to advertisements); 'cross-curricular' (learning to use the language across the whole curriculum); 'adult needs' (English as a set of functional communicative skills for use in the workplace); 'personal growth' (use of literary and other texts to foster personal development and imaginative growth). Cox (1991) claimed that they gave a broad approach to the curriculum which can unite the profession as they acknowledge the utilitarian functions of English teaching, and yet place them in a wider cultural and imaginative framework.

The most recent addition to this collective view of the subject of English at secondary level was the *cultural analysis* model. As has already been discussed, its influence was being felt both in the general debate about the nature and purposes of English teaching in higher education and in the A-level English curriculum with the development of A-level communication studies media studies and English language with their emphasis on studying a whole range of literary, non-literary and media texts.

According to various commentators (Goodwyn, 1992a/1992b; Williamson and Hardman, 1994; Davies, 1996; Hardman and Williamson, 1997) developments in the study of media education and sociolinguistics throughout the 1980s were very influential in bringing about the growth of the *cultural analysis* model in the teaching of secondary and post-16 English. They were given official recognition in the Cox Report (DES 1989) when media education and the new emphasis on sociolinguistics became a central and compulsory part of the English curriculum. It brought with it new approaches to texts and embraced an understanding and critical awareness of all forms of language and media texts, thereby aiming to provide young people with tools for understanding the modern world. To some critics, however, (Dodsworth, 1991; Hayden, 1990; Preen, 1990; Knight, 1996) the teaching of literature was being undermined with the new emphasis on language in the English curriculum.

However, far from reconciling the five models, and achieving a liberal consensus, the inclusion of the *cultural analysis* model in the Cox Report according to various critics (Davies, 1989/1996; Jones, 1992b; Snow, 1991, Bazalgette, 1994), drew attention to the conflicts within the subject. Davies (1992, 1996) suggests that while four out of five views of English offered in the report do not seem to present the prospect of any major philosophical conflict, the *cultural heritage* and *cultural analysis* models must be seen as two alternative views of the subject

despite Cox's claim that they are not mutually exclusive. Davies goes on to argue that Cox's formulation of the two models reflects the growing polarisation of views during the 1980s, both in higher education and secondary education, about what should be the concerns and content of English studies.

2.14 The conflicting subject ideologies of English

Throughout its history as a school and university subject there have always been tensions and contradictions within English (Goodman and Medway,1990; Mathieson, 1975/1991) which have been reflected in the recent attempts to revise the national curriculum Order for English (NCC, 1993; SCAA, 1994a; SCAA, 1994b, DFE, 1995). Both Brian Cox (Cox, 1995), who chaired the English working party, and Duncan Graham (Graham, 1993), former head of the National Curriculum Council overseeing the introduction of the National Curriculum, document the political battles that were fought over the rewriting of the English curriculum, particularly over the attempts by the educational right to reintroduce the formal teaching of grammar and a traditional literary canon. Cox criticises such political moves as an attempt to move the country back to a so-called golden age in the 1930s or 1950s that never really existed.

The term English itself is ambiguous, which adds to the controversy over its identity as a subject, as it can include the study of the language, literature or culture and attempts to draw boundaries for English as a subject cannot be easily disconnected from linguistic issues, from questions of a national cultural heritage and from geographical borders. Therefore, none of the contemporary debate is new, the justification for the place of English in the curriculum having always rested upon different priorities at different stages in its history.

The 1921 Newbolt Report, set up in response to government concern about the high level of illiteracy revealed by conscripts during the First World War, emphasised literary values in order to make available to all the civilising, humanising literary values of the public school. In this way a 'liberal education' would be a feature of all schools, at the heart of which was to be the nation's greatest literature. Prior to Newbolt, the English curriculum in state schools had been made up of standard English and grammatical correctness, emphasising an instrumental or utilitarian approach (Mathieson; 1991). Mathieson goes on to argue that throughout the history of English teaching in England, the literary/creative and the linguistic/vocational have remained the two main themes of the debate; this was reflected recently in the educational Right's attempt to influence the revision to English in the National Curriculum by putting forward a narrow language/linguistic competence view of English (Marenbon, 1987/1994).

In her discussion of developments since the 1970s, Mathieson (1991) suggests that government reports (Bullock, *English From 5-16*, Kingman, Cox) have emphasised the development of pupils' linguistic competence and moved English teachers in a linguistic direction, but away from the fixed notions of standard English and grammatical correctness which Cox (1995) argues the government is seeking to reinstate in our schools through the revised National curriculum. This was reflected in the development of the personal and social growth model, an approach fully endorsed by the Bullock Report (DES 1975), with its broader approach to language, shifting attention towards ways of supporting young people in the development of language skills for use in their own personal growth and their own learning. Until the late 1960s, the literary model had remained unchallenged and was supported by students of F.R. Leavis, such as David Holbrook (1961), who taught English in schools. Since the Newbolt Report, however, it had been developed and modified to include folk

culture and children's artistic self expression as a means of personal growth, so that out of the *cultural heritage* model grew the literary-creative or *personal growth model.*

However, during the 1980s these models were being criticised from two directions: political and intellectual. There was concern over standards of literacy, and the new academic disciplines, as discussed earlier, were questioning the intellectual and philosophical values of Leavisite literary criticism: that is, its traditional notions of textual unity, organic wholeness and belief in literature as morally educative.

The debate about the English curriculum became even more politicised in the 1990s with the educational Right calling for a return to 'traditional grammar teaching' and the teaching of the literary canon (Marenbon, 1987/1994, NCC, 1992). The shift away from great texts towards an understanding of contemporary culture disturbed the educational right-wing who argued that the *cultural analysis* model had a subversive purpose, destroying the teaching of great literature and undermining the values of English education which such literature is supposed to promulgate. Instead of protecting high culture by teaching pupils to resist the corrupting influence of the mass media, as was originally envisaged by Leavis and Thompson (1933) in their literary model which remained unchallenged until the 1960s, the study of popular culture in the classroom has, according to its critics on the educational Right, actually destroyed the teaching of great literature and brought about a cultural decline.

The new approaches to language study have also, according to this view, undermined the teaching of standard English by moving away from fixed notions of standard English and grammatical correctness, and by refusing to privilege it above other language varieties.

The radical Right's cultural offensive, through the highly partisan appointments to the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the Schools Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC), was evident in the proposed revisions to the English Order (DFE 1993) and in the current revised Order for English (DFE, 1995). Their view of English teaching, articulated by Marenbon (1987, 1994), that English teaching is simply a matter of grammar and great books, was reflected in the emphasis on the need to teach standard spoken and written English and the rules of grammar to all pupils, and the prescribing of a canon of English literature. As Williamson and Woodall (1996) argue, the *cultural heritage* model, with its emphasis on the teaching of a literary canon, together with a narrow language/linguistic competence view of English was once again being given dominance over the other models of English teaching, particularly the *cultural analysis* model. Therefore the revised curriculum is seen by its critics as lacking in any coherent rationale for the teaching of English because of the influence of a conservative ideology.

The educational Right's influence was also seen in the government's suppression of the Language in the National Curriculum project (LINC n.d., Carter, 1990) with its sociolinguistic approach to language awareness and in the proposals from the National Curriculum Council (DFE 1993) to drop media education from the English curriculum and to force a return to ' basics' in the subject. Such political interference, calling for a 'parts of speech' approach and a traditional canon of literature, was strongly resisted by English teachers and by Brian Cox, chair of the English Working Party which drew up the English curriculum. In a television programme (*Opinion*, Channel 4, 28 February 1993) and newspaper article (*The Times*, 1 March, 1993) he argued that such right-wing dogmas were damaging the teaching of English and forcing a return to teaching methods that had failed in the past. The proposals underwent three subsequent revisions following periods of consultation (NCC, 1993; SCAA, 1994a; SCAA, 1994b) and

in the revised English Order (DFE, 1995), there was considerable emphasis put on the teaching of standard English and grammatical knowledge. As a result, Williamson and Woodall (1996: 9) argue that the revised Order 'is an exercise in rhetoric which has reworked the Cox curriculum to meet ill-informed, frequently politicised, priorities for the teaching of English', and that as a result the new emphases do not provide a coherent rationale to underpin the curriculum in English.

Despite such attempts by the educational Right to impose a more traditional model of English teaching on the school curriculum, Hudson (1994), Davies (1996) argue that the *cultural analysis* model is still influential in the teaching of A-level English language and, as a result of this, in the secondary school, that students find such sociolinguistic approaches interesting and relevant to their lives. However, as discussed in section 2.7, the Right's influence has also been felt at A-level with the government's imposition of an upper limit on coursework assessment of 20 percent for those students examined from June 1996 onwards. This has particularly affected the most popular of the A-level English language syllabuses (NEAB) which had 50 percent coursework assessment.

2.15 Summary

The development of A-level English language as a separate subject can therefore be seen within the wider context of changes to the post-16 curriculum through the growth of vocational alternatives and reforms to A-levels. Such developments were intended to serve a wider range of abilities resulting from the growth in student numbers by addressing their personal, social and vocational needs as part of the main stream English curriculum. Therefore English language was designed to be more student-centred and allow for more practical work and analytical investigation, and for a range of assessment

procedures which included coursework and case studies as well as terminal examinations.

The ideology underpinning English language was also considered to be radically different from the traditional English literature because as a field of study it removed the special status and domination of literary texts. Such developments were seen as drawing on and reflecting the general debate about the nature and purposes of English studies in higher education. This debate was challenging the academic establishment's definition of the traditional literary canon which underpinned the teaching of A-level English literature. A similar debate was also being conducted in the secondary school English curriculum through the growth in the popularity of the *cultural analysis* model of English teaching which in turn influenced the A-level debate; this was before the educational Right began to greatly influence the educational agenda in the early 1990s (NCC, 1992) resulting in the subsequent revisions to the Cox curriculum.

As a result of these developments, A-level English language is said by commentators to have emerged as a distinct subject from English literature with clear differences in ideology and pedagogy. The investigation of these claims forms the central concern of the present study.

CHAPTER 3 CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

3.1 Introduction

Because the present study is specifically concerned with investigating and comparing teaching styles in A-level English language and literature teaching through an intensive analysis of the classroom discourse, it draws its theoretical perspective from the extensive research that has been carried out into classroom language. This chapter therefore reviews the research work that has been carried out into the patterning of discourse in whole class and small group teaching. It also explores the social constructivist view of learning because of its relevance to the present study investigating the use of discussion in A-level English teaching.

However, as the review will show, most of the research cited has been carried out with younger children in the compulsory phase of education. It is therefore difficult to know whether the distinctive patterns of instructional discourse which are found to be pervasive in the primary and secondary phases of education are also replicated in the post-16 context. Generally in the literature on A-level teaching it is assumed that discourse patterns will be different because of the conditions in which such teaching is thought to operate (i.e. smaller classes and volunteer students who are being initiated into the specialist practices of academic study). This is thought to allow for more negotiation and discussion between teacher and students leading to less transmissional forms of teaching. However, Stevenson and Palmer (1994) argue that the essential processes of learning do not vary with the age of the learner although it does affect the extent to which teachers draw on the prior knowledge of the learner. In the case of A-level English language, as discussed earlier, many commentators assume that such student-centred approaches and the students' everyday knowledge will be

given greater emphasis because of the practical, analytical investigations of language in use which are said to characterise the subject.

3.2 The patterning of classroom discourse

Studies of classroom discourse from North America and the United Kingdom (e.g. Hoetker and Ahlbrand, 1969; Edwards and Furlong, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Goodlad, 1984; Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Cazden, 1988; Edwards and Westgate, 1994) point to the ubiquity of the 'three-part exchange structure' (i.e. teacher question, student answer, teacher evaluation) and to the fact that it is found across all stages of schooling from infant/reception classes to secondary level. The three-part exchange is therefore seen as a 'teaching technology' which seems to dominate all phases of schooling.

Little empirical evidence of classroom discourse, however, has been collected to test this assertion in the post-16 context, which is one of main concerns of the present study. The widest survey of classroom practice that does exist comes from Her Majesty's Inspectors: in more than half the sixth form lessons observed by HMI for the 1988 review of secondary education 'students spent a considerable proportion of their time as passive recipients of information' with little opportunity 'for discussion or the interchange of ideas' (DES 1988b: 24). If the 'most common method' is 'the presentation of information through a lecture, supported by a teacher-directed question and answer session' (DES 1986: 22) then it would seem that teacher-controlled'recitation' of prescribed knowledge (i.e. a mixture of exposition and interrogation of pupils about its reception) which has been the predominant pedagogy in mainstream schooling also persists into the post-compulsory stage (Edwards and Westgate, 1994). One of the focuses of the present study will be to investigate this claim.

In its prototypical form, this discourse format consists of three moves: an *initiation*, usually in the form of a teacher question, a *response* in which a student attempts to answer the question, and a *follow-up* move, in which the teacher provides some form of feedback (very often in the form of an evaluation) to the student's response. This 'I-R-F format' (the variant, 'I-R-E', is preferred by some writers because of the high level of evaluation and for the purposes of the present study it will be denoted by I-R-F/E) has been labelled in a variety of ways: 'triadic sequence' (Edwards, 1980), 'essential teacher exchange' (Young, 1984), 'triadic dialogue' (Lemke, 1985), 'recitation' (Dillon. 1985).

The frequency of the exchange, and the overwhelming tendency of teachers to make the first and third move is what makes classroom discourse so distinctive. Within the I-R-F/E structure, the teacher usually holds the floor by controlling the turn-taking and presenting 'closed' questions to pupils and deciding who will answer and how, thereby providing little opportunity for student-initiated discussion. According to this pattern, the teacher either allocates turns or invites bids for the next turn according to rules which, as Edwards (1980) argues, s/he has taken great trouble to establish and defend. This distinctive feature of classroom discourse, as Edwards and Westgate (1994) extensively discuss, results from the teacher's claim to all the knowledge relevant to the business in hand, which the pupils normally concede, so that teachers routinely ask questions to which they already the answer or the limits within which an acceptable answer must fall. It is the teacher who defines the area of knowledge and controls the discourse, with the pupils' task being to discover what s/he has in mind rather than generating ideas of their own. Therefore the I-R-F/E format does not socialise the pupils into confirming, extending or challenging the knowledge being presented, and because it does not allow for genuine discussion, access to the joint construction of knowledge is withheld and the pupils are dependent on the teacher for classroom meanings instead of developing their own ideas.

Teachers from all phases of schooling frequently use the term 'discussion' when referring to their classroom practice. Similarly students in the ALIS data (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) reported that 'classroom discussion' was a regular activity in their English language and literature lessons. However, Dillon (1994: 30), drawing on his earlier research (1981, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1990), concludes that 'real' discussion, in which there is the exploration of a topic and interchange of ideas with no specific outcomes, is rare. This, he argues, is because classroom discourse often consists of a series of unrelated teacher questions that require convergent factual answers and student display of (presumably) known information. Dillon (1988: 8), therefore, is keen to distinguish 'real' discussion from other forms of interaction: discussion is 'a particular form of group interaction where members join together in addressing a question of common concern, exchanging and examining views to form their answer, enhancing their knowledge or understanding, their appreciation or judgement, their decision, resolution or action over the matter at issue'. Therefore 'recitation', or teacher-directed interrogations of pupils' knowledge and understanding, often passes for 'classroom discussion'.

3.3 Teacher Questioning

Research into classroom discourse therefore suggests that teacher questions are a predominant technique for initiating, extending and controlling the conversational exchanges in classrooms. Dillon (1988) in a survey of 27 lessons found teachers asked 80 questions per hour as against 2 content questions per hour for all the students combined, even though the lesson topics were on social issues to which students might reasonably be expected to contribute. Sarason (1983), summarising previous studies of classroom interaction, also reports that teachers questioned students in large groups from 45 to 150 times per half hour. They quizzed pupils in such a way that they responded with few questions of

their own (fewer than two questions per hour) and 67 to 95 percent of teachers' questions required straight recall for the answers.

It is suggested (McNamara, 1981; Hargreaves, 1984) that the aim of pedagogical questions is to promote reflection, analysis, self examination and enquiry and that teachers can improve their questioning technique by asking more higher order questions which it is assumed have greater pedagogic value because they stimulate thought and discussion. However Dillon (1994), drawing on his earlier research, argues that a high level question might be said to express a high level of thinking but does not necessarily cause it in the respondent. According to Dillon, discussion usually begins with a problem in which all participants share some perplexity giving rise to genuining questions. However, he suggests teachers are rarely perplexed about the questions they ask, as they typically know the answers, so there is little opportunity for sharing the question and therefore stimulating either teacher or pupil thought. Therefore teachers' questions cannot be held to have a stimulating effect on enquiry, as there is no enquiry in asking them and none in answering them.

3.4 Controlling the transmission of knowledge

Such findings suggest that there are very limited interactive and linguistic options open to pupils and opportunities for intellectual enquiry. As Edwards and Westgate (1994) argue, drawing on an extensive review of the research evidence, many classrooms are not demanding enough of pupils' thinking: they expect pupils to play a passive role by requiring them to listen, or appear to listen, often and at length, and rarely giving them the opportunity for initiating their own thoughts and questions. Research (Mehan, 1979; Willes, 1983; Geekie and Raban, 1993) suggests pupils quickly learn how to become 'competent' members of the classroom community knowing not only the content of academic

subjects but also employing interactional skills and abilities in the display of academic knowledge. They must know with whom, when and where they can speak and act, and they must provide the speech and behaviour that are appropriate for a given classroom situation. And as various commentators (Willes, 1983; Dillon, 1988/1990; Wilkinson *et al* 1990) point out, the 'rules' are quickly established in the early stages of schooling so that even very young children can tell you what these rules are.

Edwards and Westgate (1994: ch. 2) describe the 'appropriate' behaviours which pupils are expected to demonstrate which include paying attention when and as required, bidding 'properly' for the right to speak, talking on demand in response to teachers' questions, and having the answers to those questions interrupted, translated, extended and almost always evaluated. Such 'rules' are not made explicit but are tacit in classroom life and they display the unequal communicative rights of participants in the classroom: 'In orderly classrooms, the teacher takes turns at will, allocates turns to others, determines topics, interrupts and re-allocates turns judged to be irrelevant to the topics, and provides a running commentary on what is being said and meant which is the main source of cohesion within and between the various sequences of the lesson' (Edwards and Westgate, 1994: 46).

The unequal communicative rights also assume an unequal distribution of knowledge where the teacher is perceived as the expert and students are mainly or merely receivers of knowledge. This is reflected in the questions which are often asked in the classroom where the teacher already knows the answer and is mainly testing the pupils' knowledge of the topic, so that '... the "expert" will "control knowledge" by asking the questions, evaluating and shaping the answers in the light of what he or she needs to get the other(s) to say, discarding those which are thereby irrelevant or redundant, and terminating the exchange

when enough information has been obtained for the practical purposes of that encounter' (Edwards and Westgate, 1994: 48).

In controlling the transmission of knowledge and steering pupils' thinking, French and MacLure (1979) outline some of the linguistic strategies that teachers use for ensuring that students provide appropriate answers to their questions. They suggest that teachers use 'preformulators' to direct students to relevant areas of experience on which they should draw to select an appropriate answer thereby influencing the course of action. In other words, preformulators function to orient the pupils to areas of experience or knowledge which the teacher has chosen to deal with. If the preformulating strategies are not successful in providing the pupils with the experiential focus the question requires, French and MacLure suggest that linguistic repair strategies or 'reformulators' are brought into play. Here the teacher reformulates the question to make it more specific and limit the range of possible responses from which the pupils must select in order to give an appropriate answer. French and MacLure argue by such means teachers direct pupils' thinking and ensure successful accomplishment of the question by trying to avoid breakdown (preformulating) and repairing breakdown (reformulating) if it occurs.

Sinclair (1990) also suggests such strategies are commonly found in the language of the classroom, through what he terms 'sequences'. Here, a predictable routine is begun with a distinctive set of exchanges where the initiation exercises control over the next few utterances thereby increasing the ability of the pupils to predict what is going to happen and to guess responses correctly. Similarly, Dillon (1988) draws attention to the 'reconceptualisation' of the students' answer by the teacher at the evaluation move of the three-part exchange. In this way, as Hammersley (1977) points out, teacher questions often shape pupils' thoughts into an acceptable form rather than exploring their ideas, with their answers

being built into the discourse to develop the ongoing argument. Therefore if pupils are to produce the 'right' answer they must understand the conventions of teaching and move in the teacher's frame of reference.

Within the context of A-level English teaching, however, it could be assumed that different patterns of teaching exchanges would emerge. This is because most of the research cited above (with the exception of Dillon) is from younger, more novice like, pupils. In other words, because of the conditions in which A-level English teaching is thought to operate (i.e. small classes made up of mature, highly motivated students) there would be more opportunity for them to engage in extended conversation and discussion so as to encourage independent thought.

As discussed in Chapter 2, section 8, in his highly formal analysis of the structure of pedagogic discourse, Bernstein (1990: 7) discusses how the organisation of knowledge into subject disciplines brings with it authoritative styles of teaching where the relationship between transmitters and acquirers is described as being 'essentially and intrinsically' asymmetrical. He uses the term 'framing' to describe this form of pedagogic relationship whereby within the hierarchical structure, the teacher determines what is being learned, in how much time and in what sequence, and how the learning is to be appropriately displayed. Edwards (1987, 1995a) relates Bernstein's theoretical perspective to the large body of classroom research into classroom discourse, discussed above, which reveals the very unequal rights of participation to pedagogic discourse and shows students being 'positioned' in ways which confine their contribution within the teacher's frame of reference.

Edwards (1995a) goes on to suggest that Bernstein's theoretical framework is a powerful heuristic for studying and modes of teaching and learning across the

academic-vocational boundary in the post-16 context. Surprisingly Bernstein's analysis of the post-16 context is brief: in it he suggests that the 'academic' tradition of separate subjects has remained based upon strongly classified subjects studied supposedly for their own sake whereas the 'vocational' tradition has emphasised useful learning and the 'regionalising' of knowledge into distinct areas of application (Bernstein, 1990: 63). Therefore A-level represents a strong version of his 'collection code' of a curriculum of separate subjects with highly specialised domains of study.

Similarly, many commentators, as discussed in Chapter 2, have assumed that the introduction of vocational alternatives at A-level has led to a weakening of the classification of subject boundaries and to the way in which knowledge is framed. However, Bernstein suggests that while the strength of the boundaries between bodies of knowledge may be blurred, it does not necessarily lead to a weakening of frames: knowledge can be just as strongly marked off, or classified, from everyday knowledge into topics, themes or in other cross-curricular ways. In Bernstein's terms, any significant change in the 'essential' asymmetry of the pedagogic relationship requires a blurring of the boundary between knowledge and ignorance, or between school knowledge and everyday knowledge.

By the A-level stage, however, it is commonly assumed that there would be progessively less unequal pedagogic exchanges as the students as 'cultural apprentices' (Becher, 1987) are progressively socialised into, and become more competent at recognising, the working practices of their chosen subject which they are able to display in specialised speech and writing (Sheeran and Barnes, 1991). The teacher therefore becomes gradually more dispensable as a mediator between the specialised knowledge and the 'apprentice-learner' and the knowledge is more open to being questioned and less a matter of trusting the teacher-as-authority and of taking responsibility for their own learning. Such

characteristics of sixth form teaching are seen by HMI (DES, 1986,1987, 1988b, 1991) as examples of 'good practice' but which, according to their evidence, is so rarely seen because of 'the presentation of information through a lecture supported by a teacher-directed question and answer session' (DES, 1987: 22).

3.6 Managing classroom discourse

In seeking to explain the reasons why classroom interaction so often takes the I-R-F/E format many studies (e.g. Edwards and Furlong, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988; Howe, 1988) draw attention to a series of pedagogical constraints on the teacher in having to manage large numbers, and especially of controlling pupils' participation in questioning and other instructional exchanges. A great deal of classroom organisation can therefore be explained by teachers' efforts to maintain orderly interaction in conditions where reluctant learners may seek distractions, and where large numbers may compete for attention and communicative space. Therefore the 'essential teaching exchange' (Edwards and Westgate, 1994: 124) is essential because the three part type of interaction is adopted by teachers to solve the problem of having to exert social control over a class at the same time as teaching because the authority is demonstrated in the unequal distribution of student talk and the teacher's right to control the turn taking by nominating pupils to speak. 'Closed' questions are preferred to 'open' questions because by asking questions of a closed nature the teacher is able to intervene often thereby maintaining control of the interaction, whereas 'open' questions can authorise pupils in indulge in long and sometimes irrelevant answers which leaves the teacher with the task of having to regain control of the discourse.

Edwards and Mercer (1987) suggest that most teachers see close and persistent control over classroom communication as a precondition for reaching their

educational objectives. In other words, the prevalence of classroom talk with an I-R-F structure is a matter of pedagogic ideology: belief in the effectiveness of teachers' questions reflects teachers' implicit beliefs about how children learn, and how they can best be helped to do so. Mehan (1979), Willes (1983) Cazden (1988) and Geekie and Raban (1993), as discussed earlier, also acknowledge that talk in schools, like talk in every social setting, has its own patterns of discourse which must be learnt by students as a pre-requisite to being viewed as 'competent' participants in that setting. It is suggested that one of the benefits of clear lesson structure is that it allows participants to attend to content rather than procedure because management problems are minimised and teachers and students can all give more attention to the academic focus of the lesson.

Within the context of post-16 education generally, and specifically within the context of A-level teaching, however, it could be assumed that such pressures to control students are less because of smaller classes. Although the range of classes in the post-16 context reported by the Audit Commission is wide, with those in Further Education Colleges tending to be larger, two-thirds of the 'teaching groups' surveyed had fewer than 15 students and over 90 per cent were not above 20 (Audit Commission/OFSTED 1993: 49 - 50).

It could also be assumed that the motivation and maturity that supposedly comes with 'subject-minded' A-level students who are volunteers would lead to opportunities for more 'open' questions where the teacher's authoritative role and frame of reference is relaxed to allow for more interplay between alternative frames of reference. This seems particularly appropriate in a subject like A-level English literature which it is assumed has a less sharply defined pedagogic agenda than modern languages or science, leaving both teacher and student more freedom to utilise knowledge from outside school (Bernstein, 1971). It is also the stated aim of many English literature syllabuses, as HMI (DES, 1986) and

Scott (1989) points out, to promote enthusiastic, informed, independent and personal responses to texts through discussion and reflection. Such a view is also constantly reflected in examiners' reports which frequently refer to the importance of students demonstrating a personal perspective in order to achieve the higher grades (Canwell and Ogborn, 1994).

However, much of the A-level teaching observed by HMI confined students to being 'passive recipients of information' with little 'interchange' of ideas' (DES, 1988b: 29) and 'most commonly' students were expected to listen to their teacher's exposition and then respond to questions from and controlled by that teacher (DES, 1991:4). In seeking to explain the gap between teachers' best intentions and their working practices, Macfarlane (1993) like HMI cites the content-heavy nature of the A-level examinations and the high stakes attached to such qualifications as reasons. Similarly, Dillon (1994) suggests people also find discussion time-consuming and criticise it for not covering subject matter content and for not conveying a body of information. It is therefore not seen as an efficient way of producing results because it does not allow for a step by step procedure or logical progression that can be trained, implemented and evaluated using a checklist. However, such a view is challenged by Scarth and Hammersley (1988) who found few differences between examination and non-examination classes with regard to teaching method adopted and therefore question the view that public examinations cause fact-transmission teaching.

Macfarlane (1993: 60 - 62) asserts (without any real empirical evidence and assumes that his readers will accept) that the specialist subject approach that dominates post-16 teaching produces a relationship between teacher and student that is 'that of expert and initiate'. In other words, that it is for the teacher 'to inform and instruct' and for the student 'to listen and carry out instructions' so that the 'standard teaching method' is still 'largely didactic'. Jessup (1991)

suggests similar pedagogic practices will be perpetuated because of the nature of A-level examining and not (or mainly not) because of the high stakes. As noted earlier the Higginson criticisms (DES, 1988a) resemble Jessup in some ways. Therefore, there may be no lessening of the pressures at A-level that research suggests are exerted over classroom communication lower down in the school.

3.7 Re-evaluations of the I-R-F/E sequence

Despite the many concerns expressed above about the potentially stifling effect of adult talk in educational settings, recent studies have returned to the I-R-F/E structure and suggested that it can be functionally effective. Mercer (1992a: 218 - 219) argues that triadic dialogue is justified as an effective means of 'monitoring children's knowledge and understanding,' 'guiding their learning,' and 'marking knowledge and experience which is considered educationally significant or valuable.

Griffin and Humphrey (1978) in a study of the treatment of student answers in lessons suggest that the 'feedback' move in the I-R-F/E sequence has an important role to play in constructing the content domain of a lesson. In other words, rather than seeing it primarily as an evaluation of the pupil speaker, they argue that the third part of the sequence acts as a gatekeeper for the content of the lesson. This gatekeeping turn is used by the teacher to make sure educationally irrelevant or inappropriate content is removed from consideration for the lesson participants with correct responses treated in a positive way and the negative variant keeping out incorrect answers.

Similarly, Newman, Griffin and Cole (1989, p. 127), arguing from a constructivist perspective (see section 3.8), claim that the three-part exchange is' quite nicely designed' to achieve the goals of education because the exchange, as a whole, is

teacher 'collaboratively constructed' so that the students are 'part of the construction team'. It also has the advantage of having 'a built-in repair procedure in the teacher's last turn so that incorrect information can be replaced with the right answer.' In other words, the F/E turn acts as scaffolding, allowing for the modelling of 'good' responses, resulting in teacher evaluations becoming progressively less frequent and lighter.

Wells (1993) calls into question what he sees as the over simplified account of the three-part I-R-F sequence and suggests that in the hands of different teachers it can lead to very different levels of student participation and engagement. He argues that many critics of the I-R-F structure have treated triadic dialogue in an undifferentiated manner and that such an homogeneity does not exist. Drawing on evidence from a small case study, he suggests that it can be used by the same teacher, in different contexts, to achieve very different educational purposes. Sometimes the discourse is a central activity and the activity is 'fully operationalised through the discourse genre'; other times the 'discourse plays only an ancilliary role'. The first he terms a 'discourse constitutive genre' and the second a 'discourse ancilliary genre' (Wells, 1993: 11).

He therefore proposes that there are different 'discourse genres' within the same basic discourse format which make different use of the *feedback* move. On some occasions the dominant function of the third move was evaluative where the teacher was checking the students' knowledge. However, on other occasions, the third move functioned much more as an opportunity to extend the students' answer, to draw out its significance, or to make connections with other parts of the pupils' total experience during lesson topics and which created a greater equality of participation for the students. Such episodes were also marked by 'common points of reference' where everyone had 'relevant personal experience of the shared activities from which to construct common knowledge' (Wells,

1993: 30). Therefore, Wells argues that teachers can provide extending rather than evaluating feedback so that 'it is in this third step in the *coconstruction* of meaning that the next cycle of the learning-and-teaching spiral has its point of departure' (Wells, 1993:35). He does acknowledge, however, the need for more classroom-based research to support this view given the weight of evidence pointing to the severity of the functional constraints normally placed on the duration and content of pupil contributions within the I-R-F/E structure.

Nystand and Gamoran (1991) also advocate that teachers pay more attention to the way in which they evaluate pupil reponses so that there is more 'high-level evaluation' whereby teachers incorporate pupils' answers into subsequent questions. In this process which they term *uptake,* they suggest that teacher's questions should be shaped by what immediately precedes them so that they are genuine questions in contrast to recitation where Nystand and Gamoran claim there is usually a prepared list of *test* questions with prespecified answers from a list of 'essential' information against which a pupil's knowledge can be checked. They suggest that through this process teachers can engage pupils in a probing and extended discussion in which they signal to them their interest in what they think and not just whether they know and can report what someone else thinks or has said. Therefore when high level evaluation occurs, the teacher ratifies the importance of a pupil's response and allows it to modify or affect the course of the discussion in some way, weaving it into the fabric of an unfolding exchange.

Nystrand and Gamoran argue that *uptake* can function to 'chain' together teacher questions and pupil responses so that the discourse gradually takes on a conversation-like quality with teacher and pupils taking turns in speaking and thereby encouraging more student-initiated ideas and responses and consequently promote higher-order thinking. Such strategies might also lend themselves more readily to A-level English teaching where groups tend to be

smaller and where the authority of the teacher can be relaxed so as to create opportunities for students to construct, reconstruct and sometimes challenge the knowledge they are acquiring.

3.8 Language and cognitive development

It is widely recognised that an interrelationship between linguistic and intellectual structure does exist; it is therefore of importance to any study of language interaction. Although the present study is more concerned with linguistic rather than cognitive processes, it does consider the capacity of teaching exchanges in A-level English lessons to develop students' thinking as reflected in the roles they can play and contributions to the discourse. The role that classroom language plays in cognitive development has long been a subject of controversy. As MacLure, Phillips and Wilkinson (1988) and Westgate and Hughes (in press) point out, much has still to be clarified about what talk-for-learning actually looks like and the conditions under which it flourishes. Much of the work that has been carried out in the area of discourse style and effective learning has been with younger children building on the work of Piaget (1958; 1977),Vygotsky (1962;1978) and Bruner (1983; 1986) and developed and extended by Barnes and Todd (1977/1995) and Halliday (1989). It enthasised the role of language as a prime agent in cognitive growth within a collaborative framework.

For example Wells (1987), reporting on research carried out between 1975 and 1985, distinguishes between a 'supportive' style of adult interaction which encourages pupils to participate in the discussion and the construction of meaning, and a 'teaching' style where the adult chooses the topic and asks questions giving the pupils a limited range of possible responses with the frequent experience of having them evaluated by adult standards. In the view of Wells and his colleagues, the first discourse style was more successful in

promoting language development and learning as it gave the pupils the experience of sharing their thinking through talking with an adult. Wells considered that pupils should be given more experience of asking questions and finding answers by taking responsibility for talking, a practice which is not normally found with teachers who pursue pre-set agendas and who rarely respond seriously to pupils' contributions and interests.

The term 'scaffolding' has come to be used (e.g. Cazden, 1988; Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Maybin, Mercer and Stierer 1992) to describe effective intervention in the learning process by the teacher who provides certain kinds of support as the student moves towards acquiring new skills and concepts and gradually withdraws that help as the student's competence increases.

It was a term originally used by Bruner (1985) as a metaphor for depicting the form and quality of the effective intervention by a 'learned' person in the learning of another and explicitly relates to Vygotsky's concept of 'the zone of proximal development': that is, 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). The metaphor of 'scaffolding' therefore represents the special quality of this 'guidance' or 'collaboration' and has been used in studies of classroom talk because of its emphasis on the role of language, especially spoken language, in students learning. It has also been used, as suggested earlier, in studies of parent/child interation where evidence has been found of parents elaborating and building on the content and structure of the child' utterances (Wells, 1987). Although usually applied to the teaching of younger children, the concept has relevance to the present study where in the rhetoric surrounding the teaching of A-level English

the teacher is often seen as being a mediator of the knowledge under discussion in a 'seminar'.

Barnes and Todd (1976/1995), researching in the secondary school context, also argue that language carries out social and cognitive functions and is a major means of learning. They suggest that the students' use of language is strongly influenced by the role which they are asked to play as learners. Barnes and Todd distinguish two functions of talk depending on whether the focus is on the needs of the audience or the sorting out of thoughts: the functions are referred to as 'presentational' and 'exploratory'. Presentational talk is, as the name suggests, closer to a 'final draft' which has gone through stages of preparation and is often in a form which is addressed to an audience or occurs in response to teacher questions during the testing of understanding. Exploratory talk, however, is often incomplete and enables the speaker to try out new ideas and actively reconstruct information. Barnes (1992) argues that by being given the opportunity to think aloud, acknowledge uncertainty, formulating tentative ideas, compare interpretations and negotiate differences etc, students can shape meaning for themselves and thereby arrive at real understanding. However, for much of the time he suggests that the students' role is reduced to guesswork and dependence on the teacher.

This view is also subscribed to by Salmon and Claire (1984), Hull (1985) and Jones (1988) who from their research conclude that learning occurs within a social context through the medium of social relationships and that to talk something through with others is an important way of grasping new ideas, understanding concepts and clarifying feelings and perceptions. Edwards and Mercer (1987) refer to this process as 'joint understanding' and consider that it occurs when knowledge is shared, negotiated and understood by students and teachers interacting together in the classroom. This notion of 'talking to learn'

also drew theoretical justification from what has become known as a 'constructivist' view of learning .

3.9 The social constructivist theory of learning

This perspective on learning (see for example, Wood, 1988; Newman *et al*, 1989; Mercer, 1992b; Norman 1992; Barnes and Todd, 1995). suggests that knowledge is constructed by the individual through an interaction between what is already known and new experience, therefore understanding is not so much a state as a process and is greatly enhanced by social interaction. Therefore learning and teaching are seen as collaborative and involving the social and cultural perceptions of all participants; and talk is central to this process as it is the primary medium of interaction which enables learners to make explicit what they know, understand and can do. Although, as with classroom discourse, much of the research in this area has been carried out with younger children, as a theory of learning it has a great deal of relevance for the current study.

The central contention of this theory is that learners can only make sense of what happens through actively constructing models of the world. Knowledge is not seen as a pure and abstract commodity existing independently of the knower, but a state of understanding achieved through individual learners constructing mental activity. Wells (1992) points out that even when knowledge is transmitted by the teacher it does not enter the mind of the learner in the form transmitted. The simple transmissional theory of learning considers that the function of a spoken text is to enable the listener to reconstruct the speaker's meaning as accurately as possible.

However, Wells argues that communication is not simply a matter of transferring thoughts from one person to another as people contribute and extract their own

thoughts and feelings to and from the words. As well as reconstructing the speaker's meaning from the spoken text, new meanings are also generated by the listener. In other words, the learners construct their own knowledge by bringing what they already understand to bear on the new information being presented and in this way new knowledge is assimilated or accommodated and initial understanding modified or extended.

According to this view of learning, each participant in the discussion contributes to the jointly constructed meaning by taking account of what the previous speaker has said. As Wells (1989) points out, however, for this to take place, each participant needs to know the other's understanding and intention and both must take appropriate action to ensure that mutual understanding is developed and maintained. He also argues that if teachers and pupils were to extend the discourse in this way, in terms of individual understanding, it would provide the core for enacting the curriculum. By such means, according to Wells (1989) and Wray (1994), thinking would be made explicit and open to inspection, extension, modification or correction and supported by relevant arguments. The participants in the discussion would also learn from each other and about the need for disciplined thinking and the development of strategies for achieving this goal.

Barnes (1992) and Wells (1992) argue that this process of knowledge construction is essentially social: through interacting with more expert partners students acquire the discourse skills and problem solving strategies necessary to construct meaning; and by sharing perspectives learners are required to actively transform the information provided by other participants so that the resulting knowledge is not just a straight forward copy but a new personal construction. The pupils' thinking is also made 'visible': that is, not only the final authorised version of 'the thought', but also. and more importantly, the process of getting there. According

to this view of the learning process, pupils are seen as 'active processors of knowledge' (Mercer and Edwards, 1981: 38). And if, as Britten argues (1987), social behaviour is seen as the source of learning through purposeful linguistic activity with others then we must revise the traditional role of the teacher with the shift from 'teaching to learning' which Edwards (1995b) considers has been the conspicuous theme in recent innovations in secondary and post-secondary education.

As discussed earlier, such a view of learning has informed much of the rhetoric surrounding teaching and learning in GNVQ and in the modernising of A-level. It has also formed the rationale for teachers at all levels of the educational system, including those in the present study, to seek alternatives to whole class, teacher-led recitation because of the limiting nature of the communicative demands such a form of classroom discourse places on students, and which have a great deal of relevance to the current study.

3.10 Alternatives to teacher questioning

From his research into teacher questioning with 17 year old students in the USA, Dillon (1981,1984,1985) argues that teacher's questions do not necessarily stimulate students' thinking or encourage participation; rather they can depress student talk with the result of diminishing students' cognitive, affective and expressive processes. Drawing on case studies of classroom interaction, he illustrates how questions tend to discourage discussion even when conditions are favourable and 'good discussion questions' (e.g. suppose X, what then?) are used. In contrast to this, when students were not responding to teachers' questions they not only talked more but their talk exhibited additional features: more student questions; more exploration and speculation; more reference to personal

experience and factors outside the assigned lesson; more contributed topics; more participants speaking; and more references by students to students.

Drawing on his earlier research, Dillon (1994: Ch. 5) suggests a range of alternatives to questioning, what he terms 'non-question moves', which he claims enhance the processes of discussion by helping students to contribute to the question being discussed and to respond to developing contributions. He also suggests that these strategies act as a model of exemplary discussion behaviour for students for the way they should talk in a discussion. In reviewing the strategies Dillon suggests that in general, following a contribution to the discussion on the question under consideration, the other participants have four broad choices, each with several specifics to choose from. They can:

Ask a *question* about what the speaker has said.
Make a *statement* in relation to what the speaker has just said.
Give a *signal* of receiving what the speaker is saying.
Maintain an attentive *silence*.

In using these strategies Dillon argues that the teacher's lead and example will be helpful to the students in modelling and fostering appropriate discussion behaviour and in encouraging *student questions*. Therefore participants in this kind of classroom discourse have five broad choices: teacher questions, student questions, statements, signals and silences. Dillon goes on to illustrate the different strategies with illustrations and examples drawn from classroom transcripts and research studies and to suggest practical exercises for teachers who wish to incorporate such strategies into their teaching so as to move from teacher-led recitation towards a classroom discourse that resemble more of a conversational style.

Dillon (1994) also suggests that teachers and students will need explicit 'training' in the skills of discussion so that through practising the activity of discussion and being guided, corrected and affirmed in doing it rightly, they will develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours of discussion. For the teacher this will mean being far less didactic, directive, controlling and instructional, and more suited to exemplifying and facilitating the discussion. It will also mean modelling and maintaining appropriate discussion behaviours such as leadership and management functions and the use of questions, statements, signals and attentive silence.

In the context of mainstream schooling in this country, Howe (1988, 1992), drawing on teachers' case studies, argues that whole class discussion holds a great deal of potential in pupils' learning and should be included as part of the talk curriculum along with small group work and drama activities. In this way, he suggests, students will gain confidence for talking in more public contexts and experience of using more 'formal' language registers. Before arriving at the more demanding forum of the whole class discussion, however, he recommends giving pupils the opportunity to engage in some preliminary thinking through exploratory talk in pairs or small groups and using regrouping strategies (e.g. random groupings, jigsawing, envoys, rainbow groups, snowballing) as building blocks on the way to a whole class discussion. Howe also stresses the importance of establishing working conventions or 'ground rules' for use in paired, small group and whole class discussion. In discussing strategies for promoting whole class discussion, Howe advocates the following: paired and group work as valuable preparation or 'building blocks' for whole class discussion; the teacher 'orchestrating' the discussion and avoiding the use of evaluative comments; and, like Dillon, the teacher modelling a range of strategies, such as the use of statements, signals and deliberate silences, and the encouragement of pupil questions.

Similarly, as discussed earlier, in order to promote more of a discussion/conversational style in instructional discourse a number of researchers into classroom discourse (Nystrand and Gamoran, 1991; Cazden, 1988; Woods, 1992; Wells,1993) advocate that teachers pay more attention to the way in which they evaluate pupil reponses so that there is more 'high-level evaluation' whereby teachers incorporate pupils' answers into subsequent questions. In this process called *uptake*, many of the teacher's questions are seen as being *authentic* in that they are shaped by what immediately precedes them in contrast to recitation where there is usually a prepared list of *test* questions with prespecified answers from a list of 'essential' information and knowledge against which a pupil's knowledge can be checked. It is suggested that through this process teachers can engage pupils in a probing and extended discussion in which they signal to them their interest in what they think and not just whether they know and can report what someone else thinks or has said. Therefore when *high level evaluation* and *uptake* occur the teacher ratifies the importance of a pupil's response and allows it to modify or affect the course of the discussion in some way, weaving it into the fabric of an unfolding exchange thereby chaining together teacher questions and pupil responses so that it takes on a conversation-like quality in which the chaining contributes to its coherence.

Wood (1992) also suggests that the strong asymmetry of power in interactions between teachers and pupils creates a powerful barrier to the achievement of interactions in which pupils display initiative, curiosity or negotiation. Drawing on his earlier research (Wood and Wood, 1983; Wood and Wood, 1984), he argues that in order for pupils to take the initiative, the balance of control needs to be shifted in their direction, the achievement of which demands attention to a teacher's use of questions and alternative conversational tactics to recitation. His alternative discourse strategies involve 'low control' moves from teachers

whereby instead of asking frequent questions they give their own thought and ideas in which they speculate, surmise, interpret, illustrate, or simply listen and acknowledge what pupils have to say.

Wood (1992) goes on to argue that pupils will respond to speculation with speculation, hypothesis with hypothesis and suggestion with interpretation and that teachers can be trained to use these alternative discourse moves through analysis and self-reflection. When compared with normal classroom recitation, the utterances of both teachers and pupils are more extended and complex with the pace of the interaction being slower leaving more time and space for pupil as well as teacher contributions. In conclusion to his research, Wood suggests that alternatives to teacher questions which include telling, suggesting, negotiating and listening, can and do promote active and relevant involvement of pupils in classroom discussion. Such alternatives free pupils to give their own views, to reveal their knowledge and uncertainties and to seek information and explanation through questions of their own. Once the pupils have helped to shape the verbal agenda, teacher questions are more likely to involve a genuine attempt to explore their knowledge and ideas.

Most of the research into alternatives to teachers' questions has been carried out in the mainstream context where many commentators (e.g. Barnes and Todd, 1977/1995; Howe, 1988; Edwards and Westgate, 1994) acknowledge that the most obvious constraint on whole class discussion is the large numbers with which teachers are often faced. They may, therefore, be more appropriate in the context of post-16 teaching where classes are often smaller and where students, as volunteers, are perceived as being more motivated to learn; although this contention is in need of further research.

Generally, in the context of mainstream education, Edwards and Westgate (1994: 46) suggest that the managing of turns in large numbers is likely to be so complicated and the frustration of waiting for one's turn so great that the discussion will break down or breaks up into more 'manageable' units. Such difficulties have led some observers (Barnes and Todd, 1977/1995; Edwards and Furlong, 1978, Edwards and Mercer, 1987) to advocate the use of collaborative group work as a way of 'decentralizing' classroom communication so as to encourage more pupils to participate in and practice forms of academic discourse normally inhabited by the teacher.

3.11 Collaborative small-group work

Many teachers and researchers (e.g. Phillips, 1985; Howe, 1988/1992; Reid *et al*, 1989; Berrill, 1990; Wray, 1990; Corden, 1991; Maybin, 1991) have explored the possibilities of teacher-less discussion as an alternative to whole class recitation, although little, if any, of this work has been carried out in the post-16 teaching making it difficult for researchers to extrapolate from the mainstream context. This is surprising, given the official rhetoric surrounding its use in a range of post-16 courses as discussed earlier in Chapter 2.

Such approaches have also been given official approval in mainstream schooling through government and HMI reports (although this encouragement of discussion has to be placed in time because, as discussed in section 3.12, times have changed). Both the Plowden Report (DES, 1967) and the Bullock Report (DES, 1975) stressed the need for students to take a more active part in the learning process rather than being passive recipients of pre-determined packages of knowledge transmitted to them by the teacher. The Bullock Committee recognised the need for conditions to be created where the teacher temporarily relinquishes the dominant role so as to provide opportunities for the kinds of talk

associated with groups in which students 'can stretch their language to accommodate their own second thoughts and the opinions of others' and which is likely to be 'tentative, discursive, inexplicit and uncertain of direction' (Bullock Report: 146).

Her Majesty's Inspectors in numerous reports (HMI, 1978, 1979, OFSTED, 1993b) have also pointed to the lack of opportunity for students to talk at length in situations planned by teachers (e.g. discussion of a well defined topic) because of teacher domination of the discourse and suggested the importance of encouraging 'exploratory' talk through small-group talk. The most recent report (OFSTED, 1993b) concluded that teachers need practical guidance on the range of contexts and audiences for talk which can be successfully encouraged in classrooms.

In response to such needs, the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992), which carried out much of its work between 1987 and 1991, promoted through its curriculum development work with teachers and numerous publications (e.g. Baddley, 1992; Kemeny, 1993) the importance of collaborative forms of classroom talk in the learning process This approach to classroom talk was also given official recognition by the English Working Party (DES 1989) who drew up the National Curriculum for English where there was equal treatment of spoken and written modes. As discussed earlier, such approaches have also been advocated in modernising initiatives in GNVQs and in A-levels like English language advocating a 'shift from teaching to learning' (Edwards, 1995b). Such initiatives are said to be based on a philosophy of encouraging young people to be responsible for their own learning through the promotion of independent learning styles in which collaborative group work would play an important part. Similarly, Barnes and Todd (1995) suggest collaborative group work is

particularly appropriate with older students in those subjects where they can respond productively to more abstract starting points.

Collaborative group work has also drawn a lot of theoretical justification from the 'social constructivist' view of learning discussed earlier because it allows more space for student initiatives or elaboration of ideas by regularly involving them in problem solving activities and sustained discussions of their own ideas. Therefore learning and teaching are seen as collaborative and involving the social and cultural perceptions of all participants; and talk is central to this process as it is the primary medium of interaction which enables learners to make explicit what they know, understand and can do.

In discussing the features of group work where students are encouraged to explore meanings collaboratively, Edwards and Westgate (1994), Barnes and Todd (1995) and Sauntson (1995) point out the clear differences in discourse structure between this and whole class recitation. Because the absence of the teacher means there is no authoritative figure to dominate the discourse, there are no clearly-marked asymmetrical relationships and the consequent lack of pre-allocated rights makes it necessary for the students to negotiate the terms of their interaction as they go along. As Edwards (1981) argues, in such group discussion turn-taking is managed locally and interactionally and it sets up different expectations and patterns of working because speakers potentially have equal rights and joint ownership of the interaction. The pattern of interaction are therefore strikingly different from the kinds of discourse associated with the whole-class, transmission model of teaching discussed earlier. Therefore there are frequent overlaps and a lack of pauses as it is usually not clear until the moment of decision who will enter and who will control the up-coming turn. Each student's contribution is also closely contingent on the contributions of others and necessitates close listening to what has gone before. The absence of an

authoritative figure also means that there is no one to evaluate responses so students have to pool their responses to draw their own conclusions or refine their responses. It also allows for an interplay of alternative frames and relevance, and because power is equally distributed amongst the students they have a greater opportunity to initiate questions, to evaluate each other's responses and to control the discourse for their own purposes.

In this way, as Edwards and Mercer (1987) suggest, students can share in and practice forms of academic discourse of the classroom normally inhabited by the teacher: that is, sharing, comparing, contrasting and arguing from different perspectives, providing opportunities for 'instructional conversation' or the 'shared construction or negotiation of meaning'. Therefore it seems students are given more opportunities to develop linguistically and cognitively in the discourse structure of collaborative group work, making such an approach to learning particularly appropriate in the post-16 context and therefore in need of further research.

Such features of group work have been the focus of research looking at how pupils manage their relationship with one another when collaboratively approaching an academic task (Barnes and Todd, 1977/1995; Tann, 1981; Salmon and Claire, 1984; Pinnell, 1984; Phillips, 1985; Halligan 1988). And as the research suggests, the interactional features are in sharp contrast to classroom recitation where, as discussed above, the focusing and framing of talk is predominantly the responsibility of the teacher where they tell students when to talk, what to talk about and how well they talked. Given the dominance of recitation in the classroom extensively reported in research, Cazden (1988: 134) argues that collaborative group work has a justifiable role on the grounds that it is 'The only context in which children can reverse interactional roles with the same intellectual content, giving directions as well as following them, and asking

questions as well as answering them, is with their peers'. Research into small group teaching in higher education (Hegarty, 1978; Kulik and Kulik, 1979; Barnes, 1980; Foster, 1981; Ellner, 1983; Brown and Atkins, 1988), on which A-level teaching is often said to model itself, also suggests that such teaching methods can promote discussion skills and higher order cognitive responses. Such practices also seem particularly appropriate in the teaching of A-level English language and literature where students are often presented with abstract starting points through the study of texts.

More recently attention has focused on the pre-conditions for successful small-group talk in mainstream schooling (Bennett and Dunne, 1992; Galton and Williamson, 1992; Cooper, 1993; Fisher, 1993; Hardman and Beverton, 1993/1995; Westgate and Corden, 1993; Corden, 1995). Research is suggesting that careful prior attention needs to be paid to ground-rules, expectations and skills: in other words, to the perceptions and attitudes which students bring to collaborative group work so as to make them explicitly aware of its features and the part it plays in the learning process in order for them to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for effective participation in such work. In such work it is suggested that the crucial factors affecting success in group work are student self-concept and teacher behaviour. Because, as Corden (1992) argues, students are motivated to maintain self-esteem and minimise risk they often see group work as a high risk area as they are not sure why they are doing it, how they are meant to behave, what will count as success, how the teacher will react and who owns the process. According to Galton and Williamson (1992), the teacher's role is to establish a climate in which risk taking is valued by establishing and reinforcing group work skills, explaining the learning purpose of an activity, valuing and explaining the importance of the collaborative process, allowing groups to take responsibility and establish ownership, and modelling appropriate group behaviour.

Westgate and Corden (1993) found that there were some important contextual pre-conditions for teachers to be aware of at the stage of setting up small-group talk concerning pupils' expectations about audience and purpose. They found that in small-group work in the secondary school students often believed that they would have to produce an outcome, arriving at a 'right' answer or some required consensus, on which they would be assessed; therefore they saw the teacher in the role of examiner or evaluator, and this would often lead to individual work and a break down in co-operation. If, however, the teacher stressed the need for co-operation and emphasised the value of sharing ideas, this usually led to effective discussion. The students' perception of the teacher audience, therefore, was a very important factor in successful group work; in other words it is not necessarily the nature of the task itself which determines the interaction and its outcome, but the students' conception of the task, based upon their perceptions of what the teacher as their chief audience is expecting of them. They therefore conclude that teachers need to place students' perceptions of talk-events firmly at the centre of their thinking when planning for co-operative group work.

Similarly, Bennett and Dunne (1992) argue that successful group work only occurs when students are made aware of the aims of the task, and the skills and behaviours that are essential for its effective operation. They strongly advocate training in group work skills: for example, this might entail knowledge of how to listen, to question or challenge within a group discussion. They also emphasise the need for teachers to make their expectations explicit through clear 'ground rules' so that the pupils realise the importance teachers attach to such behaviours. By emphasising and encouraging such co-operative effort, and by providing feedback about the gains, Bennett and Dunne suggest students will perceive the value and benefits of talking and co-operative group work. Hardman and

Beverton (1993, 1995) also suggest the need for monitoring and self-evaluation becoming a regular part of group activities so that students are aware of and willing to comment explicitly how group talk is managed as a way of developing its effectiveness. The behaviour of the teacher during such work is also seen as being crucial, and as Corden (1992, 1995) and Baddeley (1992) suggest that teachers can model a range of roles and behaviours appropriate to group discussion which go beyond the familiar role of the teacher as expert, evaluator and examiner. Further research in this area is needed, particularly in the post-16 context, where commentators assume small-group work is a regular activity.

3.12 Critics of collaborative small-group work

Recently, however, small-group work and the constructivist view of learning which supports such an approach have been contested from the educational Right (O'Hear, 1987,1991a; O'Keeffe, 1990) as part of a campaign against 'progressive' practice. From their perspective 'real' education is inherently and properly undemocratic because its transactions are properly between a teacher who knows his subject and students who do not, and progressive practice defers to ignorance by giving too much respect to uninformed pupil opinion and so too much time to 'aimless chatter'. Authoritative teaching is therefore replaced with 'easy going discussion and opinionated vagueness' (Hillgate Group, 1987, p.3).

Criticism of group work, particularly in the primary school, has also recently come from some official quarters: for example, Chris Woodhead, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, who in a newspaper article (*The Times*, January 26, 1995) argues that the adjective didactic has become a pejorative term and that, in his defence of 'formal instruction', a 'teacher should be an authority, someone who knows and cares about his subject, who can explain matters which his

pupils would otherwise not understand, and, in so doing, fire enthusiasm and engender, perhaps, an interest which lives on into adult life'.

However, evidence from HMI and official reports suggest that the main problem with group work in schools across all stages has been poor implementation. A recent major study of the implementation of English in the National Curriculum at key stages 1, 2, and 3 for the National Curriculum Council (Raban *et al* 1994) found that the range of types of talk and audience did not adequately reflect those identified in the English Order (DES 1990), and that the most common type of talk was the teacher talking to the class and asking closed questions in a teacher-directed discussion. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) (OFSTED 1993) also reported that there was a limited range of opportunities for students to talk at length on topics and in situations planned by teachers. Both reports conclude that teachers need practical guidance on the range of contexts and audiences for talk which can be successfully encouraged in classrooms. This conclusion is also supported by research evidence (e.g. Alexander, 1992; Bennett and Dunne, 1992; Galton and Williamson 1992) which points to the effectiveness of group work but concludes that genuine collaborative work is rarely found in the primary classroom. Concern is also expressed by these researchers that the unconsidered use of such talk-strategies may prejudice the case for more purpose-related ones and they point to the need for further research to identify the characteristics of successful small-group talk and the necessary pre-conditions for such success.

Similarly the discussion paper *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools* (Alexandra *et al*, DES 1992) in its consideration of whole class teaching and group work recommended that teachers should 'exploit the potential of collaborative group work', but also points to two major weaknesses: the fact that pupils were often seated in groups but working on individual tasks,

and that teachers were assuming that pupils had the skills and attitudes upon which successful collaborative work depends. The report states 'it can never be assumed that it is enough to divide the class up, announce the activity and leave individuals within the group to interact purposefully' (par: 96), and goes on to suggest that effective group work depends upon careful preparation and meticulous management. More recently, research (Hastings 1995) has suggested the importance of varying classroom arrangements and the need for 'fitness of purpose' in the primary school so that teachers match seating arrangements to suit the learning activity.

Research by Bennett and Dunne (1992) and Galton and Williamson (1992) also found that the most problematic area for teachers was the planning of tasks which were both collaborative and productive of worthwhile learning. When discussing cognitive demands, both pairs of authors agree that collaborative tasks should be 'problem-solving' in a wide sense with tasks that could include, for example, responses to a poem or the solving of a mathematical problem. They also suggest that careful attention should be paid to appropriate groupings and tend to favour flexible, mixed ability groupings. In addition to the task and grouping, as discussed above, they also point to the importance of students' perceptions and attitudes towards collaborative group work being considered as part of the planning. From this review of the research evidence into the use of small-group talk, it is apparent that the use of group work in the pre and post-16 context is an under-researched area despite the recognition it gets in much of the literature on effective teaching.

3.12 Summary

Research into classroom discourse therefore shows the distinctiveness and pervasive nature of the three-part exchange structure which characterises much of classroom talk. It also shows a mismatch between teachers' perceptions of their classroom practice in relation to the use of whole class and small-group discussion: while teachers reported they made frequent use of discussion in their teaching, research evidence supports Dillon's (1994) conclusion that it is a rare activity in the majority of classrooms. However, this evidence, with the exception of Dillon's research, comes from the pre-16 phase of education. It is, therefore, difficult to generalise from this evidence in the post-16 context. Here it is assumed 'subject-minded' students will be working more independently, leading to a progressively more symmetrical pedagogic relationship in preparation for higher education. One of the main purposes of the current study is to investigate this assumption in the context of A-level English teaching and to see whether differences show up in the way the two subjects are taught.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ANALYSING CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

4.1 Introduction

The present study is mainly concerned with investigating whether there are differences in the way the two A-level English subjects and whether these differences manifest themselves in the patterning of the classroom discourse. As discussed in Chapter 2, it assumed by commentators that A-level English language is taught differently: that is, it is less transmissional because of the investigational, independent and collaborative nature of much of the work. It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate critically the appropriateness of various methodological approaches to classroom talk in order to provide a clear rationale for the choice of research design and method used.

Many researchers have argued that classroom interaction is readily displayed in classroom talk. For example Stubbs (1983) argues that classroom dialogue between teachers and students *is* the educational process: language is the only medium of education. Therefore it is important to see the relationships between participants in the classroom as social ones; learning is not simply a cognitive or psychological process, it depends largely upon social interaction between teachers and students in the classroom and language is central to this interaction. In other words, social identities and relationships are signalled, confirmed and challenged in the act of speaking. Similarly Wiemann and Giles (1992: 220) suggest that 'much of our social behaviour is manifest linguistically' and Semin and Fiedler (1992: 1) argue that 'language provides the medium in which social knowledge in general and knowledge about interpersonal relations in particular are mapped'. Therefore it is argued that underlying relations between teachers

and their students can be seen in the way that interactions are maintained and developed (Hymes, 1979, Argle, 1973; D'Andrade and Wish, 1985).

There are, however, as Edwards and Westgate (1994: Chs. 3 - 6) show in their extensive review of research methods, a bewildering variety of practical procedures and theoretical standpoints which compete for attention and from which a researcher of classroom language can choose. Generally speaking, there are five main traditions of classroom language analysis: systematic observation, ethnography, insightful observation, conversational analysis and discourse analysis; however, many studies of classroom talk tend to be eclectic in nature and draw on more than one tradition. In deciding on a method of analysis, Edwards and Westgate warn that any system for analysing classroom interaction will have its limitations as all such systems have to simplify and reduce 'reality'. They argue that all researchers have to make simplifying assumptions about that part of the social world which they seek to investigate if they are to gather data and therefore all observation is selective and all forms of recording partial. The criteria for selecting an appropriate methodology will depend, they suggest, on the context of the question the researcher wants to answer.

Given the range of systems for analysing classroom language, for reasons discussed in more detail below, discourse analysis was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for investigating the research questions . In contrast to the other four possible research approaches, it provided a clear and systematic basis for analysing and quantifying the use of teaching exchanges in the lessons filmed because it required that the entire corpus of recorded talk be systematically categorised. It was thought that the quantification and subsequent patterning of the teaching exchanges would provide a useful means of comparing teaching styles across the teaching of A-level English subjects and that any variation in teaching styles would be reflected in the distribution and

patterning of the teaching exchanges. Such an approach was also thought appropriate in the study of two subjects where, as the extensive ALIS data shows (Tymms and Vincent, 1995), 'class discussion' is a central activity. In other words, the two subjects are examples of what Wells (1993: 11) calls a 'discourse constitutive genre' in which the discourse is the main activity.

Before looking in detail at the research question and context of the present study, and in order to further justify the approach chosen for this particular enquiry, the relative inappropriateness of the other four methods for analysing classroom discourse will be briefly reviewed.

4.2 Systematic Observation

This method of analysis makes use of a predetermined system of categories and was very popular through the 1960s and into the 1970s which saw a proliferation of such studies. Most observation schedules concentrated on verbal interactions, regarding them as a sufficient reflection of everything that was going on in the classroom. Many focused on teacher talk, not only because there was a lot of it but also because of the assumption that what the teacher said and did would determine the course of the lesson. Such schedules were designed to survey lessons by requiring the observer to classify the interactional function of what was being said into categories which could readily be counted, grouped and analyzed. Some schedules operated on a timed system, such as coding the interactional function every three seconds, others recorded continuous interaction over longer periods of time. The categories are therefore intended to describe the interactions observed as far as is necessary to do so for the researcher's purpose. The best known scheme for analysing classroom language is Flanders (1970, 1976) which originally had ten 'verbal interaction categories', most of which related to teacher talk and which produced the 'two thirds rule' for

the frequency of teachers' questions; although as Edwards and Westgate point out he later modified his categories to capture more of the reciprocal nature of classroom talk as in other systems (e.g. Amidon and Hunter, 1967).

Observation schedules are easy to use, reliable, replicable and are an efficient way of allowing broad comparisons to be made to be made about teacher-pupil behaviour, particularly in transmissional teaching. From such research (e.g. Eggleston *et al*, 1976; Hargie, 1978) general patterns of classroom interaction have been identified which show the frequency with which teachers ask questions and that most of the questions were factual mainly eliciting brief recalls of already provided information because the pace of the interrogation left little room for thinking aloud.

However, it is the level of generalisation that critics see as one of the main limitations of this method because of its attempt to simplify and reduce the complexity of the classroom to manageable proportions. Coding categories focus on behaviour rather than the structure of the discourse. The coder is expected to use her everyday understanding of language to do the coding and it is assumed that the coder can do this in an unproblematic way. This leads researchers using systematic observation to make general assumptions about verbal interactions in order to categorise them and which necessarily limit their scope. It is assumed that what is said will be interpretable from the words alone. This has been challenged from linguistically-orientated and ethnomethodology researchers who, as will be discussed in the following sections, make use of the wider context to interpret the level of meaning and categorise the exchanges as meaning depends heavily on the shared context of the participants developed through past encounters. In other words, systematic analysis relies to a large degree on familiarity with the setting (Delamont, 1984) on the part of the observer to recognise the impact and effect of what has been said, since no formal or explicit

definition is given of how the utterances are to be coded into different categories. However, Croll (1986) defends such methods by arguing that the observer's coding of teacher and student behaviours depends not on insights into their minds but on their access to conventional ways of assigning meanings to words and acts as part of the communication process.

Another major criticism which is levelled at systematic analysis is that it does not consider the immediate sequences or stretches of discourse in which verbal interactions are located. It is argued (e.g. Sinclair, 1990; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992; Mehan, 1979) that the function of an utterance is often unidentifiable without reference to what came next as in the 'three part exchange' in IRE. As Edwards and Westgate (1994) discuss, the problem students and researchers often face is that the intentions behind a teacher's question only become apparent when the teacher responds to the answer because of the high probability that the answer will be acknowledged, corrected and otherwise evaluated by the teacher as part of the IRE exchange. Therefore, the student's attention is likely to be thrown forward to what the teacher says next as an apparently 'open' question may be closed down by the teacher's refusal to accept alternatives if it does not fit in with the teacher's agenda for the lesson. It is this tendency to ask what Barnes *et al*, (1969: 100) called 'pseudo-open ' questions which, according to Edwards and Westgate, 'constitutes a serious objection to any coding scheme, however sophisticated its appearance, which categorises questions as they are asked'.

Because the present study is concerned with looking at the patterning of the interaction in both English subjects at A-level in order to compare teaching styles, it may seem that systematic classroom observation would be an appropriate methodology of analysis. However, because the study is also concerned to look in detail at what 'class discussion' means in the post-16 context it was thought

necessary to use a method which analysed how classroom talk is organised as discourse.

4.3 Ethnography

In order to look at talk in its natural context and to resolve the problems associated with interpretation of meaning, ethnography, a mode of sociological and anthropological enquiry, uses a variety of observation, interviews and recording techniques so as to gain a picture of how people interact together, bringing in the participants' own perceptions of both task and interactions. The role of the ethnographer is therefore to discover and explicate those 'rules for contextually-appropriate behaviour' as reflected in the recorded words and actions (Saville-Troike, 1982: 107). 'Ethnography of communication' therefore focuses on the rules which regulate the exchange of meanings in particular contexts, and which assign functions to forms. For example: how are speaker turns bid for, claimed and completed; how is the transition from one topic to the next managed; what are the current speaker's rights and obligations; how are topics introduced, talked through and finished; how do speakers end their turn, nominate the next speaker or open up the floor.

Ethnography uses a holistic framework, gradually focusing the breadth of the enquiry to look in detail at the emerging issues. The researcher starts with a 'wide angle lens' and gradually concentrates attention upon the more salient features of cultural or classroom life. The situational and cultural context is considered to be central to the interaction in order to explore beneath its surface features to the underlying rules. Thus, the observed setting is perceived as occurring within the general context of a culture or society as a whole. The observer attempts to focus upon the setting and to formulate a hypothesis and analytical framework which is grounded in the emerging data itself and then to

possibly apply such hypotheses to other settings. Ethnomethodology also usually makes use of the process of 'triangulation', in which the account of the interaction is taken back to the participants in order to see how they see the world and view what actually happened.

Because ethnographical enquiry into classroom communication usually places the study of verbal interaction in a wider cultural setting, it has been considered to be an appropriate methodology for use in a number of studies looking at communication in home and school settings (Heath, 1982; MacLure and French, 1981; Wells and Montgomery, 1981; Tizard and Hughes,1984). These studies suggested a wider functional range in children's talk at home than in school because parents had more time than teachers for prolonged exchanges with an individual child. This enabled parents to embed more of their talk with children in activities which had an immediate relevance and which collaboratively engaged them in recollecting past activities and planning future events. In such contexts, children had more opportunities to initiate and shape conversations in ways which become difficult when they go to school. Wells and Wells (1984) concluded that all the homes in which they made recordings were more 'enabling' contexts for children's language development than were some of the classroom contexts.

Many ethnographic studies (e.g. Kochman, 1981; Gumperz, 1981; Erickson and Mohatt, 1982; Heath, 1982) have also highlighted the difficulties experienced by children from different cultural backgrounds in the classroom, where the discontinuities which they experience are often to do with specific functions of language. As Wells (1987) suggests, it does not represent any general language deficit, rather the different modes of communication which children from different cultural backgrounds experience in school means that they have to

familiarise themselves with genres of language which are highly valued in the classroom.

4.4 Conversational analysis

Conversational analysis also approaches the study of classroom verbal interaction from a similar perspective because of its concern with everyday talk. Conversational analysts are interested in detailed management problems in conversations such as the minutiae of smooth turn-taking and larger organising principles and structures. Although conversations may seem to meander without great structure or direction, conversation analysts have noted that they share certain similarities in overall organisation, for example starters and finishers. Each kind of conversation therefore has a recognisable and regular organisation and is made up of sequential patterns and conversation analysts put great stress on the fact that participants are themselves aware of the organisational structure of conversation.

A notable feature of conversation analysis is the great emphasis it puts on empirical data by collecting naturally occurring conversations in all their messiness and apparent imperfections which is said to guard against premature and speculative theory-building. However, Graddol *et al* (1992), in discussing the methodological and theoretical issues of the conversation analysts' approach, caution against the claim that they are dealing with 'raw' data in which recordings and transcriptions are seen as being mere mnemonics of the original event. Like Edwards and Westgate (1994), they argue that because recourse is made to transcriptions and recordings for the purpose of analysis it is futile to suppose that there could exist a single definitive and authoritative version of the original event: different participants will have experienced rather different things in the conversations recorded. The transcript, no matter how detailed it is in

capturing the original event, therefore represents an analysis generated by the transcriber. In other words, rather than being raw data the conversation analyst has already selected, organised, and partially analysed the material and therefore partly relies on intuition rather independent linguistic or formal criteria for describing the structures and organisations in the data and the extent to which it permits the exchanges to be reconstructed.

As a research method it is essentially distinct from discourse analysis which has been chosen for the current study in that the main interest of conversationalist analysts has been naturally occurring talk between equals where management is a corporate responsibility because none of the participants have authoritative rights as is usually the case in the classroom. As with discourse analysis, it identifies the exchange as a key unit of conversation, but focuses upon two part exchanges referred to as adjacency pairs (Schegloff, 1968, 1972; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). It therefore sees the exchange as a key unit of conversation, focusing upon two part exchanges (e.g. summons and responses, requests and acknowledgements). It also concentrates upon the dynamic fluidity of naturally occurring speech and such features as self-correction, formulation, backtracking and intonational clues (Schegloff *et al* , 1977). Talk from this perspective is not constrained within the characteristically rigid framework of discourse analysis, but concerned to explain the way in which speakers in informal situations organise their talk to carry out exchanges and a great deal of attention is paid to situational factors.

In their consideration of its application to the study of classroom talk, Edwards and Westgate (1994) suggest it has the potential for exploring more'open', non-traditional patterns of communication in the classroom, such as small-group talk unmanaged by the teacher, as a way of drawing contrasts with the structural features of more conventionally teacher-controlled forms of talk. However, the

concern of the current study is to study the more 'formal' patterns of teacher/student interaction where there is usually an inequality in the communicative rights and obligations between teachers and their students arising from status differences and claims on knowledge.

4.5 Insightful observation

The 'insightful observation' approach stresses the importance of everyday language for both social interaction and learning. It is an approach exemplified by the work of Barnes and Todd (1977/1995) on language and learning in school which involved detailed study and commentary of recorded lessons so as to relate language use to mental processes. Barnes and Todd's general intention was to relate observed features of classroom discourse to students' learning processes, viewing classrooms as contexts 'set up for the control of knowledge by the patterning of communication' (Barnes and Todd, 1977: 1). In other words, they were interested in investigating the interaction between the linguistic expectations brought by the students to school and the linguistic demands set by teachers in their classrooms.

The work started with a functional linguistic model of language but this was abandoned by Barnes and Todd (1977) as they discovered the difficulty of allocating definitive meanings and levels of collaboration to linguistic forms. They developed a new theory which saw meaning as constructed by the participants as part of an on-going process and as a result of the exchanges based on their individual bodies of knowledge. The terms 'interaction' and 'content' frames are used by Barnes and Todd in their analysis to describe the bodies of knowledge which participants bring to a situation: the former describing the social relationships between participants and the latter referring to the subject

matter. The interplay between the two frames also meant that the analysis took into consideration the cognitive and social skills of the participants.

This more humanistic approach, while linguistic in its orientation, is impressionistic and open to the charge that it is therefore unreliable as a system of analysis because of its 'interpretative leaps' (Stubbs, 1983). In their reflections on the 1977 work, Barnes and Todd (1995) acknowledge that such an approach is less 'scientific' and more interpretative towards the frequently multifunctional nature of utterances as part of the endlessly complex relationships between linguistic forms and their functions. However, they argue that as a theoretical framework, accounting for pupils' learning in small groups and describing the influences that shape their participation in such, it still has value as no new framework has been developed on which future research might call. The strong linguistic roots with a clearly explicated system of analysis take the framework of analysis beyond the type of case study evidence which, as Edwards and Westgate (1994: 106) argue, is often allowed to 'speak for itself' (e.g. Barr *et al* , 1982, Howe, 1988; Berrill, 1990). Edwards and Westgate also argue that the relative modesty and tentativeness behind Barnes and Todd's (1977) approach enhances its credibility, in particular their doubts about assigning unique functions to linguistic forms because of the many diverse systems of meaning available to members of a speech community and the consequent limits on researchers' certainties.

This is particularly true in less conventional classroom structures which incorporate teacher-less small-group talk, what Barnes and Todd (1977/1995) call 'exploratory talk', where none of the participants has the dominant frame of reference, or superior social or political status. The strength of the concept of 'content frames' and 'interaction frames' behind the Barnes and Todd system is that it offers a way of accounting for the negotiation of both content and

interaction in situations, particularly where the distribution of control is not clear and where there is not such a predictable discourse pattern as in a more teacher dominated setting. Edwards and Westgate (1994: 101) also argue that it is necessary to enter 'frames of understandings' or risk seriously misreading events and to provide a way of accounting for the cohesion and coherence of talk.

However for the purposes of this study, which is concerned with comparing the teaching and learning styles in A-level English language and English literature lessons through the patterning of the discourse, it was thought that a more systematic approach which examined the whole of the discourse and where the analysis could be replicated would be more appropriate. It was therefore decided to adapt a system from discourse analysis which sees talk as being centrally involved in social action and considers that the structure of spoken discourse is influential in the shaping of events.

4.6 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis, as the name suggests, is concerned with discovering the rules governing 'the actual mechanisms by which communication, understanding and interaction are maintained' over longer stretches of talk (Stubbs, 1983: 30). It is based on speech act theory which focuses on the communicative function that a particular sentence has when it is uttered and assumes that, within discourse, there is a finite set of identifiable functions that utterances can perform. The sequencing and patterning of discourse are considered central to the building up of meaning. Discourse analysis therefore pays close attention to, and provides systematic description of, the organisation of language forms used over stretches of discourse and makes explicit how this organisation relates to the coding system derived from retrospective analysis of recordings. It also requires that the entire corpus of recorded talk be systematically categorised, partly to evaluate

the category system being used or developed, and partly to show its role in giving coherence to the talk so that there is a built in assurance about the adequacy of the system to account for all that was recorded in the given setting. Discourse analysis, particularly in an educational context, has become associated with the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975: 2) who were not educationalists but linguists originally concerned to devise a model for the systematic study of discourse. They saw in the classroom an attractive research setting because 'teacher-pupil relationships are sufficiently well-defined for us to expect clear evidence of this in the text'.

There are, however, several problems of a methodological and theoretical kind with discourse analysis which need to be recognised in order to indicate where the methodology can be best used. First, it is acknowledged by some commentators discourse analysts (e.g. Burton, 1980; Delamont, 1981; Stubbs, 1983) that only one level of function is coded (the function of an utterance *within* the discourse), therefore playing down the dynamics and complexity of the classroom context and making it difficult for such a system to account for the subtleties and ambiguities that arise in the negotiation of meaning so that it has nothing to say about the way language is used to convey irony, threats, humour etc.

Second, as Graddol *et al* (1992) argue, if one accepts this limited notion of function, it is unlikely that utterances can be analysed unambiguously in terms of a single function therefore requiring some interpretation on the part of the analyst. Therefore, although the aim was to produce a system in which the categories of an utterance would be clear and unambiguous, in practice there is unlikely to be agreement about all coding decisions.

Levinson (1983) also criticises discourse analysis as a general approach because, unlike conversational analysis, it is not concerned with the meanings of acts but with the function they perform; this he sees as a fundamental weakness. He argues that some speech acts can perform more than one function and that non-verbal responses can also perform appropriate responses to utterances. Therefore the discourse and extra-linguistic context in which an utterance is made will play a crucial role in the assignment of its function. He also criticises discourse analysis because the rules which govern the sequential organisation of conversation have been generated from well-formed action sequences such as in classroom settings. However, while this criticism may apply to the study of conversation in informal contexts between 'equals', it does not invalidate their use in the more formal context of the classroom where communicative rights are not distributed equally because of the type of tightly structured talk that is often found between a teacher and students in classrooms, where the teacher is in control (normally) of information that has to be conveyed to students.

Similarly, Edwards and Westgate (1994: 101) argue that while discourse analysis fails to acknowledge the significance of social context or shared cultural experiences in the classroom as is the case with Barnes and Todds (1977/95) analysis, what they call the 'silent language' which underlies and supports what is put into words, it has played a valuable role in research by providing a theoretical framework of enormous practical value. Such research has revealed how the three move exchange of initiation-reply-evaluation (or I-R-E) is a prevalent feature of classroom life at all phases of compulsory schooling (Edwards and Furlong, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Wells and Montgomery, 1981; Willes, 1983; Edwards and Mercer, 1987; Hughes and Westgate, 1990).

The descriptive apparatus for spoken discourse developed by Sinclair and Coulthard is detailed in their book *Towards an Analysis of Discourse* (1975,

Chapter 3: 19-60) as a coding manual for researchers and has been further summarised and modified by commentators and researchers (Stubbs and Robinson,1979; Burton, 1981; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Willes, 1983). More recently a slightly modified version has appeared (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992). The system of analysis proposes that lessons can be analysed as having five *ranks*:

lesson

transaction

exchange

move

act

A lesson consists of one or more *transactions*, which consist of one or more *exchanges*, which consist of one or more *moves*, which consist of one or more *acts*. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) propose therefore a hierarchical organisation although no rank has more importance than any other, so there is no reason why an analyst should not choose to concentrate on one or two ranks only, if it suits the research purpose as in the work of Hughes and Westgate (1990).

In summarising the descriptive apparatus Stubbs and Robinson (1979), Burton (1981) and Willes (1983) start at the middle rank, with the *exchange* and the *move* as it is here that they argue that the description is best developed, theoretically most complete and most satisfactory in use. The exchange is seen as the fundamental unit of discourse and in classroom discourse there are two classes of exchange which are formally and functionally distinct: the *boundary exchanges* which signals the start or, less frequently, the conclusion of a topic and the *teaching exchanges* which serve an educational purpose. Each consist of a small number of elements. Boundary exchanges comprise a *frame* or a *focus* or both: a

frame is signalled by a small set of items such as 'now', 'well' 'ok' and in conclusion 'so' or 'finally'; a focus exchange is signalled by a statement indicating a development in the lesson.

Teaching exchanges have either two or three elements of structure. An exchange is started by an *opening* move usually followed by an *answering* move which may be verbal or non-verbal. Often this is followed by a *follow-up* move. It is this last move which is a distinctive feature of classroom discourse as it is usually an evaluation of the student's comment. Opening, answering and follow-up moves are elements of structure in teaching exchanges and in turn are realised by *initiating*, *response*, and *feedback* moves. Each move has a structure, some elements of which are obligatory: each move has a *head*, as a rule obligatory, and optional elements, the prehead and the posthead, before and after. These elements of structure are realised by *acts*. Below the move, at the level of the act, the descriptive system is acknowledged to be less than satisfactory (Stubbs and Robinson, 1979; Willis, 1992) because the coding categories are not entirely explicit and no reason is given for having just twenty-two acts. Each of the 22 acts is functionally distinct and 20 are required for the realisation of elements of structure at the level of the *move*. The other two have distinct functions: the *loop* describing what happens when classroom discourse falters and there is a need to return to an earlier point and the *aside* when what is said does not really form part of the classroom discourse.

The existence of boundary exchanges implies the existence of larger units of which they are boundaries: *transactions*. Transactions therefore consist of an initial boundary exchange followed by a series of teacher exchanges. *Lessons* consist, in turn, of a series of transactions. It is acknowledged by Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) that at top of the scale it is difficult to regard the lesson as a linguistic unit: the lucid and methodical arrangements that make a good lesson

interesting and assimilable derive from logical or narrative structure, not from discernible and describable linguistic structure, and therefore allow for variation in discourse style and teaching method.

4.7 An appropriate method of analysis

Surprisingly discourse analysis has not been used as a research tool to investigate teaching styles and the nature of classroom discourse in the post-16 context possibly because it was thought inappropriate for use with older students having been developed from work with younger children and the time consuming nature of the methodology. Nor has the system been extensively used for comparing teaching styles across different subjects and age groups despite Sinclair's and Coulthard's (1975) assertion that it could be used in this way. Such evidence is needed to see if the same situational and communicative constraints which have been identified in other phases of schooling operate at this level.

Discourse analysis was therefore thought to be appropriate to the present study because it provides a clear and systematic basis for analysing and quantifying the use of teaching exchanges in classroom settings where the teacher plays a leading role in directing the talk and where role relationships are clearly defined. It was thought that the quantification and subsequent patterning of the teaching exchanges would provide a useful means of comparing teaching styles across the teaching of A-level English subjects. In other words, it was assumed that any variation in teaching styles would be reflected in the distribution and patterning of the teaching exchanges.

Sinclair's and Coulthard's (1992) system has also been usefully applied in group talk settings with a teacher, during conventional learning situations, to show

ways in which students participate in discussion and their ability to identify and follow interactional rules (Burton, 1980; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Willes, 1983). It was therefore thought appropriate to apply it to group talk in the A-level English lessons where the teacher worked with a group to see if there was any variation in the patterning of teacher's interaction with students. However, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) acknowledge that it cannot handle, and was not designed to handle student/student interaction. No attempt, therefore, was made to apply the system to such forms of interaction when they occurred in the A-level English lessons.

By allowing for the quantification and analysis of the distribution of the teaching exchanges in order to compare teaching styles, discourse analysis forms part of a developing approach within the general study of language which involves the categorising and quantification of language. Scholfield (1995) labels this broad study of language quantification/measurement as *Linguometry*. He suggests there are four general approaches to gathering language data for quantification in order to measure a particular phenomenon although he recognises that the four approaches do not ever really measure *exactly* the same 'thing' : the first he terms *fully naturalistic* and *non-reactive* where the participants do not know they are being quantified and involves listening to naturally occurring conversation and counting the occurrence of a particular language feature; the second he terms *reactive* involving *quasi-naturalistic interaction* where the cases know they are being quantified in some way but usually not for exactly what; the third he terms *reactive* involving people's *opinions* where the researcher cannot conceal what is being quantified and the topic of communication is language itself, perhaps asking people how often they use a particular language feature; the fourth he terms *reactive* involving people's *manipulation* of some verbal material and is usually in the form of language testing. The four approaches clearly move from

the more natural in the first one to the more forced in the fourth where the variable that is being studied is more tightly controlled.

According to Scholfield (1995), most quantification of language falls *fairly* clearly into one of these four types and for quantifying many aspects of language you have a choice which general type of technique to use. In the case of the present study, as discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the second of these approaches has been adopted with the teachers and students knowing they are being studied in order to look at teaching and learning styles across the two A-level English subjects but without knowing the exact nature of the variable being studied (i.e. the patterning of the teaching exchanges).

4.8 Summary and evaluation of the literature

Having reviewed the relevant literature in order to contextualise the present study it emerges that there is very little empirical evidence of teaching and learning in the post-16 context generally and specifically on the teaching of A-level English. In the absence of such evidence, all commentators can do is speculate and generalise about differences in ideology or ways of organising knowledge, pedagogy and assessment practices which are said to differentiate the academic from the vocational route. A similar picture emerges in commentaries concerning the teaching of A-level English literature and English language which have little theoretical or empirical justification.

It can also be seen from the review of the literature that similarities in educational objectives are emerging within the different curriculum contexts created by A-levels and by Advanced GNVQs with both traditions claiming a 'shift from teaching to learning' (Edwards, 1995b). In the case of A-level English literature, it is claimed this was aided by the introduction of 'alternative' syllabuses with

coursework assessment; in English language it is thought to be through the use of research projects and collaborative forms of learning which reflect more of a vocational tradition. Apparent differences between the academic and vocational traditions are further confused by HMI descriptions of 'good practice' across the two educational traditions which appear to be very similar, and by their survey findings that didactic forms of teaching dominate both traditions.

The ALIS data base (Lacy and Fitz-Gibbon, 1993) and ESRC research (Edwards, Fitz-Gibbon, Haywood and Meagher, 1996) discussed in Chapter 1 also reveal that while teachers within advanced vocational courses used a wider range of classroom methods (for example group work and students researching a topic) there were also striking differences in common learning activities between academic subjects.

The review of the relevant literature and research into classroom discourse also reveals a lack in empirical research into the nature of classroom talk in the post-16 context generally. While extensive studies reveal the ubiquity of the I-R-F/E across all stages of compulsory schooling, little research has been carried out to test this assertion beyond the age of sixteen. Similarly there is a lack of research into the discourse of A-level English teaching where 'discussion', in the form a seminar, is often seen as being a central activity in which the teacher is no more than a leading participant or facilitator in a process of discovery.

Given the gap in knowledge about post-16 teaching and learning generally and in the teaching of A-level English literature and English language that the review of the literature and research has revealed, the present study attempts to extend the current level of understanding by investigating the way in which the two A-level English subjects are taught and about the nature of classroom discussion at this level of education.

CHAPTER 5 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

Following the review and evaluation of the relevant research literature, a gap in current knowledge can be identified: a lack of empirical knowledge about the way in which the two A-level English subjects are taught and more generally about the nature of classroom discourse at this stage of education. This study therefore attempts to extend the present level of understanding by examining these issues.

5.2 Aims restated

The aims of this study were outlined at the end of Chapter 1 and are restated below in order to establish the methods of enquiry which are thought to be appropriate to the present study. The listed aims were threefold:

1. to examine and compare the patterning of classroom interaction used in the teaching of A-level English language and English literature so as to investigate how students are taught and how they learn in the two subjects;

2. to investigate how teachers perceive the two subjects in terms of the knowledge-base of the two subjects, how they define the boundaries between them, and what differences are articulated between the pedagogies appropriate to each;

3. to compare the qualitative findings of the current study with the ALIS statistical data on learning activities used in A-level English language and English literature lessons.

The present study therefore investigates the teaching styles of a sample of ten teachers who teach across the two subjects at A-level and looks at the nature of classroom talk in this post-16 context. It makes use of a framework of analysis adapted from the study of discourse which investigates the linguistic patterning of classroom talk at the level of the teaching exchange. Semi-structured interviews with all the teachers who took part in the study are also used to explore their perceptions of teaching the two subjects in terms of the way the subjects are conceived and taught in the classroom.

5.3 The sample

Data were collected from a sample of ten English teachers, who taught both English language and English literature at A-level in the Tyneside area and whom were known to the writer through Newcastle University's initial teacher education partnership. They were therefore selected on the basis of an 'opportunity sample' (Cohen and Mannion, 1994) from six comprehensive schools and one sixth form college. Such a selection was unavoidable when the availability of access of an intrusive and continuing kind depended on the good will of particular teachers. The nature and size of the centres did vary, however, serving a variety of catchment areas ensuring socio-economic mix, and there was a cross section of teaching experience in the sample ranging from two to thirty two years. The gender balance was less equal, however, with only two women in the sample. This might reflect the fact A-level teaching is regarded a high status activity and therefore more likely to be taught by those holding senior positions which in the English departments studied were usually held by men. In some of

the larger centres, it was possible to research two teachers who taught both subjects (i.e. Teachers B/D and F/I).

Although more intrusive, a video camera was used to record the lessons as it was felt that capturing paralinguistic features would help in transcribing and analysing the tapes. The observations and filming of the lessons took place over a period of six school terms (i.e. January 1993 till December 1994) before the government imposed a 20 percent restriction on coursework assessment at A-level and the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) published its core requirements for all A-level English syllabuses. Therefore at the time of the data collection all of the teachers were teaching the NEAB English language syllabus with 50 percent coursework, except for Teacher C who was following the London Board syllabus with 30 percent coursework. Seven of the teachers were also teaching an English literature syllabus with 50 percent coursework (i.e. Teachers B, D, E, G, J were teaching NEAB syllabus C, and Teachers F and I were teaching AEB syllabus 660). Altogether the twenty lessons, which ranged from fifty to ninety minutes in length, amounted to twenty two hours and ten minutes of videotape for transcription and coding.

Prior to the filming of the lessons, each teacher was observed less systematically and more informally on four separate occasions (i.e. teaching two language and two literature lessons) to ascertain the typicality of the teaching styles used in the lessons filmed for analysis. This meant that in total sixty lessons were observed for the study. It also allowed the teachers and students to get used to the idea of having an observer present in the classroom.

A profile of the teachers and schools is given in Table 1.

Table 1: profile of Teachers

Teacher	Gender	Years in teaching	Type of school
A	Male	27	11 - 18 all girls comprehensive
B	Male	23	13 - 18 suburban high
C	Male	9	11 - 18 urban comprehensive
D	Male	32	13 - 18 suburban high
E	Male	11	11 - 18 urban comprehensive
F	Male	17	Sixth form college
G	Male	24	11 - 18 urban comprehensive
H	Female	2	11 - 18 suburban comprehensive
I	Female	6	Sixth form college
J	Male	4	13 - 18 rural high school

5.4 The data gathering techniques

Because the present study is concerned with whether English language and English literature at A-level are taught differently and with the nature of classroom discourse at this level, it was felt that, as discussed in Chapter 4, a framework of analysis adapted from discourse analysis (Sinclair and Coultard, 1992), which looked at the linguistic patterning of classroom discourse, would be the most appropriate. The study therefore is a intensive investigation of the teaching styles of ten teachers who teach across the two English subjects at A-level. The teachers' perceptions of teaching the two subjects in terms of their subject identities (i.e. aims, objectives, content, ideology, boundaries) and subject pedagogies were also sought using semi-structured interviews which were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. The interviews were carried out prior to the observations and the collection and analysis of the classroom data. Following the analysis of the classroom data, the teachers were followed-up to discuss their reactions to the findings and to consider the usefulness and implications of the research for analysing their teaching styles.

In order to compare the teaching styles used in both A-level English subjects, less systematic observations were carried out (four lessons in total for each teacher) prior to the video-recording of a complete English language and English literature lesson for each teacher in order to establish the typicality of the teaching styles being used. Twenty lessons were therefore video-recorded, transcribed and coded according to the framework adapted from Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) system of discourse analysis, focusing on the teaching exchanges as outlined in section 5.6. In comparison with other studies making use of discourse analysis (Burton, 1980; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Willes, 1983) this represents an extensive amount of data in what is a very intensive and time consuming process (e.g. an hour's filming took on average 15

hours to transcribe and a further 30 hours to code using the discourse analysis system).

Although the teachers and students were told that the research was investigating teaching styles in the two English subjects at A-level, they were not told about its precise focus (i.e. the structure of the classroom discourse) or the framework of analysis as it was thought this knowledge might have had a confounding effect on the behaviour of the teachers and students. The study therefore adopted a 'quasi-naturalistic' (Scholfield, 1995: 53) data gathering approach where the cases knew they are being quantified but they were not sure for exactly what so as to make the teacher/student interaction as 'naturalistic' as possible given the exposure of the fact that something is being observed and measured.

5.5 Problematic Issues

Achieving clarity of recordings in the classroom with a whole class of students presents considerable problems as does the intrusion of a video camera in obtaining naturalistic data. The possibility of the teachers' behaviour being affected to some extent by the perceived expectations of the research project has to be acknowledged. For anything to be quantified there must be an observer/measurer, but it is recognised in sociolinguistics under the rubric of the *observer's paradox* that the very presence of the observer may alter what he/she is observing, especially the naturalness and casualness of informants' speech. As Labov put it (1994: 20) we want to 'observe how people speak when they are not being observed'. Bearing these considerations in mind, because I was well known to the teachers and because the students got to know me through the informal observations to contextualise the lessons, the intrusion of the video camera appeared to be less of a threat than it might otherwise have been. This seemed to allow for the recording of lessons under conditions not far removed

from the naturalistic situation in which the teachers and students would normally be working. The use of a boom microphone also greatly enhanced the quality of the sound recording of the data for transcription purposes whilst creating the minimum of intrusion.

5.6 Framework of the analysis

Having transcribed and coded the lessons according to the system of analysis developed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1992), the present study will compare teaching styles across the A-level English language and English literature lessons by focusing on the patterning of the teacher/student interactions at the central rank of the system: at the teaching exchange. The teaching exchange therefore forms the main variable of interest to the current study.

In their discussion of the descriptive apparatus, Sinclair and Coulthard are confident that the system is most reliable up to the rank of the exchange as it draws on linguistic considerations in describing what is going on. Beyond that the control exercised by language becomes less marked. Although three major transaction types have been identified (i.e. informing, directing, eliciting), made up of the 11 teaching exchanges, it is acknowledged that they are provisional and therefore not sufficiently reliable as a major element of coding. Similarly at the level of the lesson, Sinclair and Coulthard cannot specify any ordering of transactions into lessons so that the lesson must be thought of as a stylistic type rather than a linguistic unit. It also seems appropriate that the study should focus on teaching exchanges to compare teaching styles given that it is seen by many commentators (e.g. Sinclair, 1972; Stubbs and Robinson, 1979; Sinclair, 1990; Coulthard and Brazil, 1992, Willis, 1992) as the basic unit of interaction in which a distinctive structure has been identified in much teaching.

5.7 Teaching exchanges

Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) identify eleven subcategories of teaching exchanges with specific functions and unique structures all of which are illustrated by data from the study. Of the eleven subcategories six are *free* exchanges and five are *bound*. The function of bound exchanges is fixed because they are not initiating moves whereas the free exchanges can be initiated by the teacher or, as in two cases, by the students. The four main functions of exchanges are informing, directing, eliciting and checking. These are illustrated with examples taken from the classroom data which is analysed more fully in Chapter 6 (see section 6.1 for a fuller explanation of the conventions of coding and layout).

The *teacher inform* exchange is used for passing on facts, opinions, ideas and new information to the students and usually there is no verbal response to the initiation as in the following example from Teacher G's English language lesson where he is explaining his criteria for a mini-language project [1] :

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	right	Fr	m
Teaching	T	you seem to have a clear idea of where of where you're going	I	s
		try to remember that your work is largely descriptive that is don't worry about		i

[1] The *moves*, Initiation, Response, Feedback, make up the three-part teaching exchange which in turn are made up of acts: m = marker; s = a starter; el = an elicit; ch = check; d = directive; i = informative; p = prompt; cl = clue; n = nomination; rep = reply; rea = react; com = comment; acc = accept; e = an evaluation; ms = metastatement; con = conclusion; l = loop; z = aside. Different stages in lessons are signalled by Boundary exchanges consisting of two moves: framing (Fr) and Focusing (Fs), both of which can occur together.

discovering some earth moving conclusion

that no one's ever seen before don't worry

about that what you need to exhibit are these

things in a good project you need to be

methodical hence the reason for talking about

the method you need to be methodical you

need to be open minded and you need to

record honestly what you find don't set out

looking for things you think might be there

just look and record what you do find open

mindedness and method and thoroughness

so leave no stone unturned eventually

The *teacher direct* is designed to get the students to do but not say something, whereas the *teacher elicit* is designed to get a verbal contribution from the students. The teacher elicit exchange which occurs inside the classroom has a different function from most questions in everyday life because the teacher usually knows the answer to the question which is being asked. This accounts for the feedback move being an essential element in an eliciting exchange inside the classroom because the students, having given their answer, want to know if it was correct. Both teaching exchanges are illustrated in the following extract from Teacher D's English language lesson where he is working with a group of students on how language is used to establish points about Jimmy's character from *Look Back in Anger*. The *teacher elicit* is illustrated by Turns 1 and 6 and *teacher direct* by Turns 5 and 9:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	let me just pull this together with a few final questions because they're touching the same	I	s

		ground over there I would suggest		
		what do you think of Jimmy here		el
2	S	he's bigoted as well	R	rep
3	T	go on evidence	I	p
4	S	well he just writes off anything that you're saying and he thinks he's always right all the time	R	rep
5	T	put that down Mark	I	d
6	T	any other words to err to attach to Jimmy	I	el
7	S	pretentious	R	rep
8	T	pretentious	F	e
9	T	put that one down as well	I	d

Although *student elicit* is listed as one of the free exchanges, Sinclair and Coulthard acknowledge that inside the classroom students rarely ask question and if they do they are usually of a procedural nature asking, for example, for a page reference. The crucial difference between teacher and student elicits is that students usually provide no feedback as evaluation of a teacher's reply would normally be seen as deviant. A *student elicit* is illustrated in the following extract (Turn 1) from Teacher J's English language lesson where the students had been asked to discuss a series of statements on standard English:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	do you have to write down what you say	I	el
2	T	yeah you have to write down whether you agree or disagree	R	rep
3	T	(To whole class) can I just remind everybody that I want you to put down whether you agree	I	d

or disagree or somewhere in between and then

put down the question but don't sit around and

worry about it it's no good putting down the

question until you've answered the query

about it

Occasionally students offer information which they think is relevant, or interesting and they usually receive an evaluation and comment on its worth as in the following example from Teacher G's English literature lesson where a student has been asked to do a presentation on the character of Autolycus from *A Winter's Tale*:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	if he didn't go to the sheep shearing festival	I	i
		then nothing that would be the end of the play		
		wouldn't it because then you there		
		wouldn't the Shepherd and the Clown go to		
		Sicilia and the father wouldn't be presented		
		before Leontes and then the reconciliation		
		between his daughter wouldn't happen		
	T	umm that's very true isn't it	F	e
		as far as the direction of the plot is concerned		com
		Autolycus plays a very important part there		

The final free exchange is the *check* which teachers will use to monitor how well students are getting on, whether they are following the lesson and whether they can hear; feedback to such questions is not essential as they are real questions to which the teacher does not know the answer. This is illustrated in the following

example from Teacher H's English literature lesson where the teacher is paraphrasing line by line an extract from Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale*:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	the next one brothels and *tavernes* same meaning inns pubs	I	i
	T	ok you all keeping up this won't take long just a few words to fit in	I	m ch

Of the five type of bound exchanges, four are bound to teacher elicits and one to teacher direct. With a *re-initiation* exchange, of which there are two sub-categories (for the purposes of the research the two sub-categories for re-initiation were subsumed and quantified under the one heading), if the teacher gets no response to an elicitation he or she can rephrase a question or use a prompt (p), nomination (n) or clue (cl) to get a reply to the original question (re-initiation i). Alternatively if the teacher gets a wrong answer, the choice can be to stay with the same student and try by 'Socratic' method (an ambiguous term as it has connotations both of open enquiry and getting the students to tell the teacher what he/she wants to hear) to work round to the right answer or stay with the same question and move on to another student (re-initiation ii). Here feedback does occur in the exchange. Both types of re-initiation are demonstrated in the following extract from Teacher E's English language lesson where he uses re-initiation (i) (Turns 8, 10, 12) and re-initiation (ii) (Turn 14) exchanges to move the students towards the 'correct' answer in response to his question about the stages of children's lexical development:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	which brings us on to just about where we	Fs	ms

		ended up last term		
2	T	which is the third stage called	I	el
3	S	semantics	R	rep
4	T	no that's the third element of language acquisition	F	e
5	T	we divided up phonology grammar semantics we said that the early in looking at grammatical development we said there are three stages in grammatical development one word holophrastic two word and then Rose has got a crib list (inaudible)	I	el n
6	S	do you call it stage three or something	R	rep
7	T	stage three no	F	e
8	S	telegraphic	I	rep
9	T	telegraphic good guess not quite there	F	e
10	S	telephone	I	rep
11	T	mm closer	F	e
12	S	telephonic	I	rep
13	T	telephonic (laughs)	F	e
14	T	Sarah has actually found her file and is going to tell us the answer	I	n/p
15	S	telegraphic	R	rep
16	T	telegraphic	F	e
		the third stage called the telegraphic stage		com
17	S	what's the middle one called then	I	el
18	T	two word one word holophrastic and the third stage telegraphic	R	rep

If the teacher withholds an evaluation until two or three answers have been provided, such an exchange is categorised as a *listing* as in the following extract also from Teacher E's English language lesson where he is looking for the part of speech known as a determiner in answer to his question (Turns 10, 11 and 12):

Exchanges				Moves	Acts
Teaching		T	I'm interested in this is a certain type of well what does this tell you about the milk	I	s el
	2	S	adverbial	R	rep
	3	T	NV	F	e
	4	S	adjective	I	rep
	5	T	no adjective would say oh it's milky milk it's creamy milk it's sour milk that would be an adjective wouldn't it	F	e com
	6	T	it tells you something about the amount or the extent doesn't it or the number yeah now the type there is a term which will explain what those types of words are	I	s el
	7	S	(inaudible)	R	rep
	8	T	I'm going to do something easier I'm going to play hangman soon (laughter)	F	z
	9	T	you do know it begins with *d*	I	el cl
	10	S	*di*	R	rep
	11	S	*du do da* (laughter)	R	rep
	12	S	*de*	R	rep
	13	T	oh you've got another letter	F	e
	14	T	well these types of words determine oh I've		com

just said it that determines the amount doesn't

it a milk some milk any milk yeah so therefore

determiners

In situations when someone does not hear or where the teacher has heard but wants the reply repeated for some reason, the exchange is classified as a *repeat*. This is illustrated in the following example from Teacher B's English language lesson where the students are considering and translating a pastiche of *A Clockwork Orange* written by one of the students; here the teacher asks the student to repeat the answer (Turn 7):

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	one I liked this bit	I	s
		one drippy day		el
2	S	one rainy day	R	rep
3	T	one rainy day	I	el
4	S	yeah	R	rep
5	T	Julie go on	I	el/n
6	S	he saw a man walking with a a cow	R	rep
7	T	with a what	I	l
8	T	a black and white beef is a cow a fresian cow	F	com
		alright		e

Finally in the bound exchange there is a *reinforce* which very occasionally follows a teacher direct when a teacher has told the class to do something and one student is slow or reluctant or hasn't fully understood. This exchange was not used by any of the teachers in the study.

5.8 Coding Reliability

The reliability of the present research is dependent on the accuracy of the coding using Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) system of discourse analysis. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.32, there is an inevitable degree of arbitrariness about assigning coding to utterances due to the fact that all descriptive systems inevitably simplify (Stubbs and Robinson, 1979; French, 1990; Graddol *et al*, 1992) in order to transform the complexities of talk into coding criteria. Therefore discourse analysis as a general analytical model, which when applied to actual data, will require some interpretation on the part of the analyst based on their competence as a cultural member.

To check that the coding in the present study is consistent, a sampling procedure was carried out with three colleagues with experience of using Sinclair's and Coulthard's (1992) linguistic coding. They were given samples of lessons to check against the coding system as set out in Sinclair and Coulthard's *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils.* There were no consistent discrepancies arising from their checking of the coding of the transcripts at the rank of the teaching exchanges, therefore they can be assumed to be reasonably valid and reliable.

5.9 Teacher interviews

Interviews were conducted and audio recorded with the teachers prior to being filmed in order to explore their perceptions of teaching the two English subjects offered at A-level. In order to engage in a conversation and to allow the teachers to express themselves at some length, a semi-structured interview schedule was devised with preset areas for questioning which could be introduced in any order, depending upon what seemed natural at the time (Milroy, 1987: 72). This

allowed for an informal conversational style of interview with colleagues who were well known to me and space for the teacher's own thoughts and reflections. It also meant that they saw me as a fellow expert against which there was a backcloth of shared meanings which contributed to the informality and the opening up of the discussion.

The interview was designed to investigate what the teachers set out to achieve in their day-to-day teaching of the two subjects and how they managed to achieve their goals (what Brown and McIntyre (1993) call teachers' professional craft knowledge) and to explore their thinking about differences (if any) in aims, content, and teaching styles.

In constructing the interview schedule and for analysing the interview transcripts, it was found useful to draw a distinction between 'subject paradigm' and 'subject pedagogy', categories taken from a study of subject subcultures by Ball and Lacey (1994). According to their definition, subject paradigm refers to views of English as a subject (i.e. how its aims, content, purpose, boundaries, etc. are formulated), and subject pedagogy to the teaching strategies deployed to make the chosen content learnable. These distinctions were found to be helpful in getting the teachers to talk about the aims and ideology which they see underpinning the two English subjects and about the teaching strategies they employed. The interviews were structured under the following headings:

- Biographical details of teachers - qualifications, teaching experience etc.

- Aims, learning objective, ideologies, content of the two A-level English subjects.

- Differences in teaching and learning styles between the two subjects.

- Influences/developments on the A-level English curriculum resulting from GCSE/GNVQ/national curriculum/higher education.

- Perceptions of the students taking the two A-level English courses.

Data from the interviews is used in discussing the background to each of the teachers who feature in the study and in the discussion of the findings. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with all ten teachers to gauge their reaction to the analysis and its usefulness in providing feedback on their teaching, and these are considered in the discussion of the findings.

5.10 The selection of data

The analysed data comprises over 22 hours of video tape filmed in seven centres which when transcribed, coded and set out according to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975: 61 - 62) conventions for presenting analysed texts amounts to 563 pages of documentation. It is not feasible to present the whole data in the main text, although this is available as a separate bound volume. It has been necessary, therefore, to make a selective (although extensive) choice of transcripts from the main body of the data which is offered as a true representation of the whole data. Every effort has been made to avoid 'exampling': that is, selecting a small, unrepresentative sample and presenting it as an accurate description of the total recorded data. The examples have been chosen to illustrate common patterns in the teaching exchanges which are supported by quantitative data showing the overall patternings of the exchanges in each of the lessons as back-up evidence for the selection of material and their representation is made explicit in the chapter which follows.

5.11 Format for presenting the findings

This chapter has outlined the methodology used for analysing the data in this study. The following chapter describes the application of this method in producing the findings of the study. It reports on the teachers' perceptions of teaching the two English subjects at A-level in terms of their subject paradigms and subject pedagogy, and on the analysis and comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges that occurred in the two lessons recorded (i.e. an English language and an English literature lesson) for each of the ten teachers to see if, and in what ways, they varied their teaching styles.

CHAPTER 6: THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

6.1 Introduction

It has been established in Chapter 5 that the particular focus of the present study is to compare methods of teaching and learning in the two English subjects offered at A-level (i.e. English language and English literature) using a system of discourse analysis so as to examine the patterning and nature of the classroom discourse at the level of the teaching exchange.

In this chapter, the findings of the current study are presented in which the teaching styles of the ten teachers, as revealed in the teaching exchanges as they teach across the two subjects, are compared, together with an analysis of the roles played by each set of participants in stretches of discourse. An analysis of the interviews carried out with the teachers before they were filmed is also presented in order to compare their perceptions of teaching the two subjects with their classroom practice as revealed in the analysis of the classroom discourse.

In presenting the findings, each teacher is considered separately with contextual notes on each of the lessons analysed, a discussion of their views on teaching the two subjects as expressed in the interviews, and a detailed analysis of the patterning of the teaching exchanges and roles played by the teachers and students in the classroom discourse.

In the original analysis of the twenty lessons, the transcriptions were coded and set out according to the conventions first used by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975: Ch. 4). Here the page is divided into four columns: the first column shows the exchange type with the next three indicating initiation, response and feedback moves. One reads down the first column until one reaches a horizontal line

across the page, then reads down the second column to the line, then down the third column. However, because this format entails changing the orientation of the page set-up, it is not possible to use it in the body of the main text. Therefore, a layout adapted from Sinclair and Coulthard by Edwards and Westgate (1994: 141) has been used in which an exchange sequence can be read across the page from left to right and in which the three move exchange is indicated by the *moves* and *acts* listed on the right-hand side of the page. The absence of punctuation marks in the transcripts also differs from the originally conventions used by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975): like Stubbs' and Robinson's (1979) application of the system, it was considered artificial and of no real benefit to the analysis to impose a feature of the written system on a representation of the spoken because of the differences between speech and writing (Czerniewska, 1985; Milroy and Milroy, 1991; Perera, 1994).

In reporting the findings, results of the quantification of the teaching exchanges for each lesson have been converted into percentage scores to allow for direct comparison of discrete data from unequally sized distributions of teaching exchanges. The quantification and percentage scores of the teaching exchanges are therefore presented in table format together with a pictorial representation of the percentage scores in the form of bar charts. This allows for easy reference and comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges across the two lessons recorded.

As discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.7), Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) specify eleven sub-categories of teaching exchanges with specific functions and unique structures. Of the eleven sub-categories, six are *Free* exchanges (i.e. Teacher Inform, Teacher Direct, Teacher Elicit, Student Elicit, Student Inform, Check) and five are *Bound* (i.e. Re-initiation (I), Re-initiation (ii), Listing, Reinforce, Repeat). The function of bound exchanges is fixed because they

either have no initiating move, or have an initiating move without a head which consists of *nomination, prompt* or *clue* which simply serve to reiterate the head of the preceding free initiation. Of the five bound exchanges, the *Re-initiation* exchanges constitute two of the sub-categories: *Re-initiation (I)* is when the teacher gets no response to an elicitation so that s/he can start again using the same or a rephrased question or use one or more of the acts - *prompt, nomination, clue* - to re-initiate so that the original elicitation stands; *Re-initiation (ii)* is when a teacher gets a wrong answer and s/he decides to stay with the same student and try by 'Socratic' method to work him/her round to the right answer or keep the question and move on to another student and where feedback does occur indicating incompleteness or reservation. For the purposes of the present study. however, these two sub-categories have been subsumed and quantified under the one heading in the tables and charts. Different stages in lessons are signalled by Boundary exchanges consisting of two moves: framing (Fr.) and Focusing (Fs), both of which can occur together.

Where necessary in follow-up moves, intonation has been indicated using the original system devised by and (1975) where the reference number of the tone group is presented in square brackets. Thus a low rising tone which signals something more is required is indicated by [3], a rising tone which questions a student answer by [2], a rising falling tone which implies reservation by [4], a high falling tone which shows strong agreement by [1+] and a low falling tone which accepts but does not evaluate the response by [1-]. Non-verbal surrogates of discourse acts are presented by.

6.2 Teacher A

Teacher A had been in teaching for 26 years and throughout most of his career he had taught on conventional A-level English literature syllabuses assessed by terminal examinations. For the past six years, however, he had been involved in teaching an A-level English language syllabus offered by the Northern Examination and Assessment Board (NAB) which included 50 percent courseware assessment.

In his interview, prior to being observed and filmed, when asked about whether he perceived any differences in learning objectives and how the two subjects are taught, Teacher A thought that there were distinct differences. He thought many of these arose from the fact that A-level English language drew from the field of sociolingistics, thereby allowing for the study of a much wider range of texts in the classroom of which English literature is only one variety. It therefore removed the privileged status that English literature was still accorded in the traditional literature syllabus that he taught (NEAB, syllabus B). Such views reflect the general debate about the nature and purposes of English teaching which had been taking place in higher education since the 1970s over what can and cannot be counted as 'English' (Williams, 1983; Doyle, 1989; Dixon, 1991; Easthope, 1991; Evans, 1993; Peim, 1993; Blue, 1995)

Teacher A thought that English language had more of a 'vocational' orientation because of its practical-orientation and emphasis on communication skills and for this reason attracted less academic students who would not normally be accepted on to an A-level English literature course. He also thought there were distinctive pedagogic differences in the way he approached the teaching of the two subjects as illustrated in the following extract:

'Looking at the practical arrangements in class I find that in literature, despite what I say about going into the social background and philosophical factors, I spend probably a lot more time actually interpreting texts to the whole group of students. I don't know whether this is because I take a traditional approach to it. I think partly because there is necessary, they need that input especially when you're dealing with you know texts as old as Shakespeare so they need that assistance in interpretation and it must be done in a group to a great extent. So there's a lot more time spent on whole class activities.'

Therefore although he frequently used discussion in his literature lessons to encourage a personal response to texts from his students, Teacher A thought there was a greater tendency for the work to be teacher-directed because of the shared nature of the text in which his role as an 'expert' was to unlock meanings by providing interpretations for the students. However, in his language lessons, he felt there were more opportunities for investigative and collaborative forms of learning and ways of arriving at interpretations in which students could undertake and report on small-scale studies of aspects of language in everyday use:

'In language what we are increasingly doing in lower sixth at this very moment is asking the students, having sampled over two terms of the course again a lot of theory in the first two terms, there has to be, but at this stage we ask them to prepare a mini-project which will allow them for a start to conduct some research of their own in preparation for the main project in upper sixth. But it also involves a change of teaching style, they are very diverse topics and so as a result each I advise have you read this, have you seen this. I can stop them all occasionally and say of course when you're approaching research first of all you must go through this form. They all have a pack, a hand-out pack, in which the basic approach is explained but I'll stop them every so often and reinterpret things and then they'll go back to doing what they are doing. It's always very difficult to know in trying to balance the type of input you have for lessons because you can get it too heavily weighted towards the didactic

> approach and then all of a sudden they can be researching themselves where they're very much more independent.'

Teacher A therefore reported that he used much more of a 'student-centred' approach in his A-level English language teaching, where the students were expected to take considerable responsibility for their own learning through the use individual research projects or investigations in contrast to a more didactic approach in his English literature lessons.

Analysis of lessons

Teacher A's English language lesson consisted of a group of eight year 12 students who were in their third term of the course. The lesson focused on the issue of what is meant by 'bad' language as a part of a more general topic on language and society (see Appendix 1). The English literature lesson was made up of twelve year 12 students who were also in the third term of their course and who were studying Blake's *The Tyger* in preparation for an unseen critical paper which they would be soon sitting as part of their mock examination (see Appendix 2).

Throughout both lessons, each of which lasted 60 minutes, Teacher A interacted with the whole class so that the students were working on the same topic at the same time with the nature and timing of the tasks being closely prescribed. This replicated the structure of the four lessons observed before the filming. There was, therefore, a relatively restricted range of learning activities with both lessons being dominated by teacher exposition and teacher-directed question-answer exchanges together with student note taking (again teacher directed) and the occasional reading of a short extract.

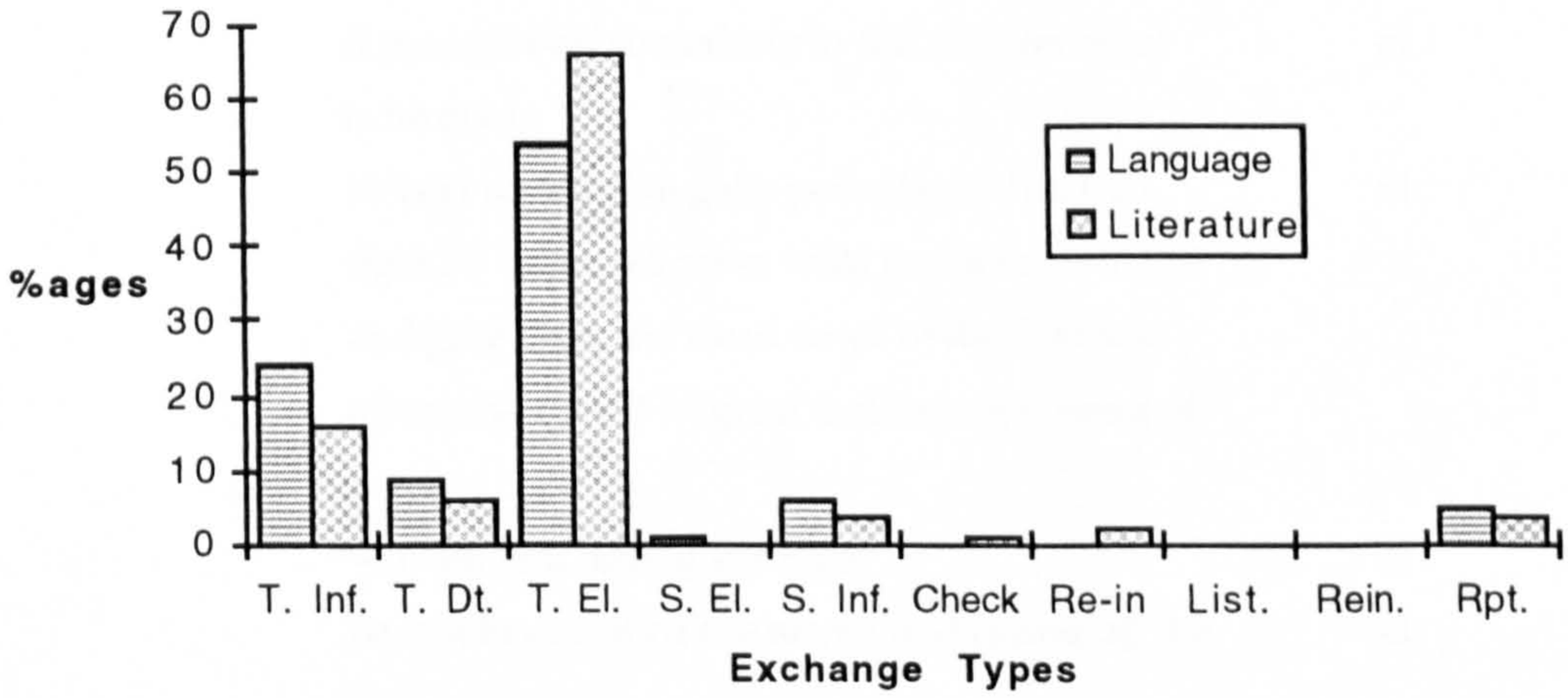
This finding is reflected in the systematic analysis of the teaching exchanges occurring in both lessons. Table 2 shows the quantification of the ten categories of teaching exchanges for each lesson expressed first as a figure and then as a percentage score.

Table 2: Distribution and percentages of Teacher A's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	34/24	13/9	77/54	2/1	9/6					8/5
Eng. Lit.	25/16	9/6	103/ 66		6/4	2/1	4/2			7/4

A comparison of the patterning the teaching exchanges based on the percentage scores from Table 2 is illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3: The patterning of Teacher A's teaching exchanges



The similarity of the patterning of the teaching exchanges in both lessons is striking suggesting that Teacher A does not vary his teaching style across the two subjects. The findings also reveal the extent to which teacher-presentation and teacher-directed question-and-answer dominate both lesson: his *eliciting* and *informing* exchanges account for 82 percent and 78 percent of the exchanges in the

English literature and English language lesson respectively. Therefore in both cases, Teacher A tightly controls the turn-taking and topic by working rigidly within an I-R-F/E framework and the students are given little opportunity to initiate and contribute ideas beyond their utterances in response to the questions. This is reflected in the very low level of student initiations. Usually the students' responses are brief and teacher framed in contrast to the teacher's questions and explanations which are usually long and elaborate and which chain together to form lengthy transactions. For example in the following extract taken from the English literature lesson, the teacher is considering Blake's use of repetition of *Tyger, Tyger*:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	now I reckon that despite that you can't start off generally a poem about a creature by repeating the name of the creature twice he does it here and gets away with it	I	s
		why		el
		if you start off something in this fashion what is he doing		el
		he isn't saying I've got a poem here about a tiger I'd better tell them what the poem is about and give them the word twice in the first line otherwise they'll forget it that's not the point of it is it		el
		why do you have tyger tyger		el
		have a look at the little arrow that comes off the tiger		cl
		why repetition when do you hear repetition		el
2	T	if you go home tonight Alison and you are met by your mother and your mother says Alison Alison (laughter) you say hey that reminds me of a poem (laughter)	I	s
		no what is her frame of mind	el	
		what's her approach	el	
3	S	something is wrong	R	rep

4	T	something is wrong	E	e
5	T	why does she repeat it	I	s
		I mean why do you say to her oh come on		s
		mother you know me you don't have to remind		
		me you don't have to tell me twice you don't		
		have to go on through that rigmarole do you		
		but come on		p
		or if teacher comes into class and says Emma		el
		Emma what's she trying to do		
6	S	(inaudible)	R	rep
7	T	be boring and repetitive like all teachers I	F	z
		suppose		
		yeah [1-]		acc
8	T	erm no what's teacher trying to do	I	s
		Emma Emma		s
		why repeat		el
		emphasis yes more than that though		cl
9	S	find out something on you find out why you	R	rep
		done (inaudible) get to us		
10	T	it is trying to get you to respond	F	e
	T	but why is it that people when they are	I	el
		addressing you might feel obliged to		
		I don't know to use that tone of voice		
		I mean it's not Emma Emma (laughter)		cl
11	S	that's your mother	R	rep
12	T	precisely	F	e
		that means come here because I want you to do		com
		something isn't it		
13	T	we're back to the language area quite	I	s
		you go into the room you go into the house and		
		you hear the voice upstairs Emma Emma then		
		you know she's not going to break into poetry		
		erm it means that you've forgotten to clean the		
		budgie's cage out or something		
		but if she confronts you in the hall and says		el
		Emma Emma what's her feeling what does she		
		feel like		
14	S	disgust distressed	R	rep
15	T	oh no I know why she's saying that	I	s

		Emma Emma (laughter)		s
		how does she feel Emma Emma		el
16	S	distressed	R	rep
17	T	yeah she feels distressed in despair	F	e
18	T	certainly there's a lot of strong feeling going through her	I	s
		she is in		s
		what's she trying to do		el
		erm I mean what's she trying to come to terms with perhaps		el
19	S	confusion	R	rep
20	T	yes	F	e
21	T	something you do that she cannot com	R/I	cl
22	S	comprehend	R	rep
23	T	comprehend precisely [1+]	F	e

(Teacher A - English literature, pp. 9 - 10)

This section illustrates clearly the teacher's pervasive use of the three part exchange and the elaborate nature of many of his sequences of elicits which are chained together to form a lengthy transaction. The extract also illustrates how the teacher often uses *starter* acts as a matter of routine in opening moves. These are similar in function to what Edwards and Mercer (1987) call 'cued elicitations' and French and MacLure (1979, 1981) term 'preformulations' where he provides advance warning that a question is imminent and some clues as to how to answer it. We also see him 'reformulate' his questions throughout the sequence in an attempt to arrive at the answer he desires by simplifying and building into its restatement some of the information needed for the acceptable answer and where the ingredients of an appropriate answer might lie. It also shows the way in which teacher-directed talk of this kind creates the impression of knowledge and understanding being elicited from the students rather than being imposed by the teacher. As Edwards and Westgate (1994: 144)) suggest, this 'subterfuge' is revealed by a closer analysis of the discourse.

A similar patterning of teacher-directed question-answer exchanges also dominates the classroom discourse in Teacher A's language lesson as the following extract illustrates. Here he is reviewing the topic of taboo in language which has been covered in a previous lesson:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	do you remember we dealt with this briefly when we were going over language and gender erm we said that there are some areas where erm in lexis where you can identify the main areas of taboo language	I	s
		what are they		el
		can you remember that for bad language		el
2	S	animals	R	rep
3	T	good out three little titles	F	e
4	T	go on under examples first title animals	I	s s
		come on do you remember some of the words we got out of that for bad language		el/p
		like we say well your mother says eeh you shouldn't call her that you shouldn't call her a		cl
5	S	bitch	R	rep
6	T	bitch animal language	F	e
7	T	well yes quite I mean in his book Trudgill goes into the question as to why it's wrong to call someone a bitch and say oh you rotten kangeroo	I	s
		I mean what's wrong with kangeroo		el
		(laughter)		
		why can't you use kangeroo		el
		I mean toad is a bit nasty but it's not as I suppose it's greasy nasty one but bitch has got horrible overtones it's got animal and sexual overtones to it		com
		any other words in the animal area		el
8	S	cow	R	rep

9	T	yes bitch and cow quite	F	e
		we're back to that you see how it all links up		com
		again to language and gender language and		
		society		
10	T	but you've got another couple of areas which I	I	el
		think are obvious ones		
11	S	food	R	rep
12	T	now hold on a minute under taboo language	F	e
		let's get this clear		com
13	S	I know tart	I	i
14	T	oh right	F	e
15	T	now is it taboo	I	s
		I know I must ask the question because I'm		s
		starting off with the assumption that I know		
		and perhaps I don't		
		would your mother say to you that's bad		el
		language you can't call her a tart		
16	S	no	R	rep
17	T	mince pie yes but not a tart (laughter)	F	z
		no I think that it's a bit strong		e
		yes it's close to it but I can't think of any food		com
		words which actually enter the area quite of		
		taboo I think it gets close to it but not quite		
		it's mind boggling isn't it erm but I don't think		e
		so		
18	T	is there anything else	I	s
		oh you jelly you you liquorice comfort you		s
		no it's not quite right is it		el
19	S	NV	R	rea

(Teacher A - English language, pp. 12- 14)

Again, the extract illustrates the rapid pace of the teacher's questioning and the predictable sequence of recitation. There is a large amount of teacher elaboration through the use of *starters* and the rephrasing of questions in contrast to the brief responses expected from the student which show a high level of simple recall. Similarly, the students' responses are usually evaluated and commented on by the teacher who has the right to determine what is relevant within his pedagogic

agenda. Therefore their 'familiarity' with the topic does not bring about a change in the discourse style in the language lesson to create more opportunities for student participation. In both lessons, the students are merely expected to respond within the teacher's epistemological frame of reference. As the 'expert' passing down information, the very fullness of Teacher A's exposition generally excludes the possibility of alternative frames of reference emerging from the students.

It is also interesting to note how, in the above extract, the teacher deals with the rare example of a student attempting to introduce an alternative frame (Turns 11 - 17) with the suggestion that the language of food can be included under taboo. Following the teacher's questioning of this suggestion, the student supports her suggestion with the 'tart' example thereby drawing on her everyday knowledge which he stated in his interview he aimed to foster. Although the teacher pauses for a moment to think it over and acknowledges that he may not know the answer, the opportunity for further exploration as to the sexual connotations of the word 'tart', and to hand over the mantle of the expert to the students, is not taken up and the lesson is quickly brought back to his frame of reference by an elicit exchange (Turn 18).

As discussed earlier, teacher exposition is also a common feature of the teacher A's style: in both lessons many of the teacher's informing exchanges are very detailed and at some points they resemble mini 'lectures' or monologues as in the following example from the language lesson. Here the teacher is considering the origins of the word *decimate* and how its meaning has changed:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	now then to decimate is to vastly reduce a number	I	s

		where does it come from		el
		the editorial in *The Guardian* says hey wait a minute we're not using words correctly because decimate comes from Latin		com
		Sarah sorry what's ten in Latin		el/n
2	S	deca	R	rep
3	T	deca	F	e
		it comes from the word ten in Latin to reduce by one in ten		com
4	T	do you know the story about the Roman generals	I	el
5	S	no	R	rep
6	T	they haven't told you that one	F	e
		oh dear		com
7	T	I don't know I think this was part of what was called the great Eskimo hoax in the English language	I	s
		do you really believe this that in the erm Roman army that if defeat was suffered then one in ten of the foot soldiers was dragged out and killed to teach the others a lesson this was called a process of decimation you kill get rid of one in ten but of course well look through the article erm of course this doesn't happen I mean can a football team only be decimated if one player of the ten remaining players is taken off of course not		i
8	T	so	I	m
		language change well language change is going to affect word meaning it's no use going back to word origin and saying that's what it mean we're back to the Humpty Dumpty situation which I quoted to you many moons ago you can't stick to that language will change		i
9	T	but surely you do notice there's a common theme erm running through that letter and editorial and that is these are both examples of bad language	I	i

(Teacher A - English language, pp. 28 -29)

The quantity of Teacher A's questioning and informing exchanges contrasts sharply with the students', reflecting a lack of opportunity for them to initiate such exchanges in the discourse. This is particularly the case with *student elicits*: none occur in the English literature lesson and there are only two examples in the English language lesson. The first is in response to the teacher's request for examples of local dialect while considering the topic of 'bad' language when a student asks how to spell an example that has been offered (Turn 4):

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	so come on give me some other examples	I	s
		I mean I'd be a bit wary perhaps of having too		s
		many in our bad language list because we		
		know where that leads us		
		erm what about the erm bad English list		el
		can anyone think of some obvious ones that		el
		you hear about the house and about school		
2	S	*ha'way man*	R	rep
3	T	go on put it *doon ha'way*	I	d
4	S	how do you spell it	I	el
5	T	ah because this is the old problem isn't it	I	s
		because we have a way of transcribing		
		standard English now this is a very good		
		question		
		we know how to translate standard English		s
		the rules and regulations		
		except people in 3B never learn them but still		z
		erm we have set rules but when it comes to erm		el
		dialects and you have people speaking in an		
		accent how do you transcribe that		
		great difficulty some people have a stab		com
		anyway the *Evening Chronicle* always do this		
		ha'way-the-lads they even translate it into		
		goodness knows what for you		

		ha'way how do you spell it go on how would you spell it		el
6	S	do you spell it *h* apostrophe *way*	R	rep
7	T	yeah that's as good as any *h'way h'way* it depends you want to get yourself on the Gallaway terraces and listen to them do they say now excuse me sir did you say *h'way-the-lads* or *away-the-lads* (laughter) yes it's like professor what's err name out of *Pygmalia* with a recorder and err I don't think you'd get very far would you *h'away-the-lads* yeah there's a good one	F	e com

(Teacher A - English language, pp. 10 - 11)

The teacher's response to the student's question, in which he asks a further question, again illustrates his domination over the discourse and lack of opportunity for more open exchanges, and the elaborate nature of much of his questioning and explanation. The second student question arises a little later on in the English language lesson when Teacher A moves on to explore examples of blasphemy as part of the topic of taboo in language:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	erm the Elizabethans use to have all sorts of extravagant ones they use to swear by the nails of the crucifixion	I	i
2	S	his toe nails (laughter)	I	el
3	T	no not his toe nails you silly person no no no (laughter)		

(Teacher A - English language, p. 17)

Here the question is jocular in nature (Turn 2) and reflects the teacher's humour that dominates much of the lesson in order to make it 'entertaining' for the students.

Overall, the evidence from the analysis shows that Teacher A's account of how he teaches the two subject does not correspond to his classroom practice. The classroom experience for the students in both lessons was clearly defined by him both in the presentation of topics and in the prescription of tasks. Teacher recitation rather than discussion was rigidly used throughout both lessons. The patterning of the discourse shows there was little variation in his teaching style and few opportunities were provided for the students to contribute ideas beyond suggesting possible brief answers to his questions and these proceedings were usually dominated by one or two individuals. Teacher A was firmly in control of the discourse in which he asked most of the questions and provides most of the evaluations, commentary and information. General observation also suggests that while he was developing his thinking about the topics under consideration, and while the students were clearly enjoying the teacher's performance, they were denied the use of the language functions available to the teacher, particularly initiations and evaluations, which would allow them similar opportunities to engage in and demonstrate the same levels of thinking.

6.3 Teacher B Analysis

Teacher B had been teaching A-level English literature from the start of his career twenty years ago and since the late eighties had been involved in the teaching of an 'alternative' English literature syllabus (NEAB English Literature, syllabus C) with a 50 percent coursework option. He was also a chief moderator of English literature coursework for NEAB and as a result liked to keep up-to-date with developments in English studies in higher education. His experience of teaching A-level English language went back five years when he started teaching the NEAB English language syllabus with 50 percent coursework. In his interview, he thought there were clear differences in the way the two subjects were conceived and taught because A-level language involved the investigation of

language in use and drew far more on students' everyday knowledge. This meant that the definition of what constituted a 'text' worthy of study in the classroom was much broader so that the privileged status of the 'literary canon' which underpinned the teaching of literature was being challenged. These differences were also reflected in the much broader body of knowledge which had to be covered in the study of language:

'The challenge of course is that with the English literature syllabus you can sit down in September before the two year course starts with the colleague that you've paired up with and you can actually say I'll do this, you do that, here's the course. With English language in a sense I never know much beyond two or three weeks what's coming next. I've got a sort of mental picture of how things have got to plan out but there's such a huge body of knowledge that I can't cover it all and it's got to reflect what they know and don't know. Therefore, it makes you think a lot more in terms of planning and creating ideas and resources.'

In discussing his teaching styles, Teacher B thought that his approach to the teaching of literature was more teacher-centred than in his language lessons:

> 'I suspect we are not using the seminar and reporting back method nearly as much in literature even though we are seeing it work with some success in language. There seems to be this corporate group activity in reading.'

The use of the shared class reader, which he reported was common practice in his literature lessons, meant that he often worked with a whole group on a literary text so that the nature of the task and pace of work were more closely prescribed. However, he felt that his practice in English literature had been influenced by his English language teaching and by the debate in higher education which he tried to keep abreast of, particularly in the way he now read all texts, including literature, as cultural artefacts whose meanings are not fixed and therefore open to different interpretations so that 'This point of no fixed meaning really has percolated my literature teaching and language has helped it.' This change in his

thinking had brought about a shift in his teaching style in English literature: he now endeavoured to be less authoritative in his teaching and through a 'seminar discussion' encourage alternative readings by leaving students free to make extended, thoughtful comments of their own:

> 'I suspect that the idea that any piece of writing is a text and that any piece of writing comes from a specific purpose and is directed at a certain audience and the cultural baggage which comes with both writer and audience. If you are looking as an Intercity Railway advert with a language group and then you move on to *Othello* the next lesson with your literature group you are bound to hear *Othello* slightly differently. It's not quite going to be the single rooted meaning. My answer to that question is in the end that I probably fifteen years ago would have been happy to dictate, well not probably dictate, I would have written out a note on Iago's motives and I might have said critics have found this a puzzling problem but I might have tried quite hard to find the answer for them. Now I probably wouldn't even put it in writing for them at all because I would expect them to work it out themselves through *discussions*. My answer would be look at all these possible interpretations, that's the answer in itself, not now go for one.'

In comparison to his English literature teaching, however, Teacher B thought there were distinct differences in the way he approached the teaching of A-level English language because of the investigative nature of language study and the need for the students to develop skills and knowledge which would enable them to carrying out their own language research. He therefore thought his language teaching was more student-centred with the students being given more opportunities to work independently, thereby taking a greater responsibility for their own learning. However, he acknowledged the difficulties this approach entailed:

> 'The other really difficult thing for English teachers which I have found is to leave the kids to get on and do the work. Once they've got these projects and research and they've got to go off to places and use libraries

and word processors and need time to draft and plan. They certainly do it here if the whole thing is being done properly. It's very difficult for English teachers to sit at the front and apparently not do anything, to be a tutor rather than a teacher. We're such word churners aren't we. We're never happier than when we're addressing the whole lot.'

Despite the demands being placed on students in A-level English language, Teacher B thought that it was 'catering for the least able of all A-level uptake' because the students who were attracted to it 'say they aren't readers' and who lack 'the broad cultural interest' that English literature students bring to their studies. Generally he thought that language students perceived the subject in much more of a 'utilitarian' way than those students who chose literature because of their enjoyment of reading.

Analysis of lessons

Both of Teacher B's lessons were fifty minutes in length. The English literature class was made up of eleven year 13 students and was centred around the study of developments in Othello's character in Act 1 Scene 3, lines 303 - 411. The English language class was made up of eight year 12 students who studying the structure of words in extracts from *A Clock Work Orange* and a pastiche of Burgess' novel produced by one of the students (see Appendix 3).

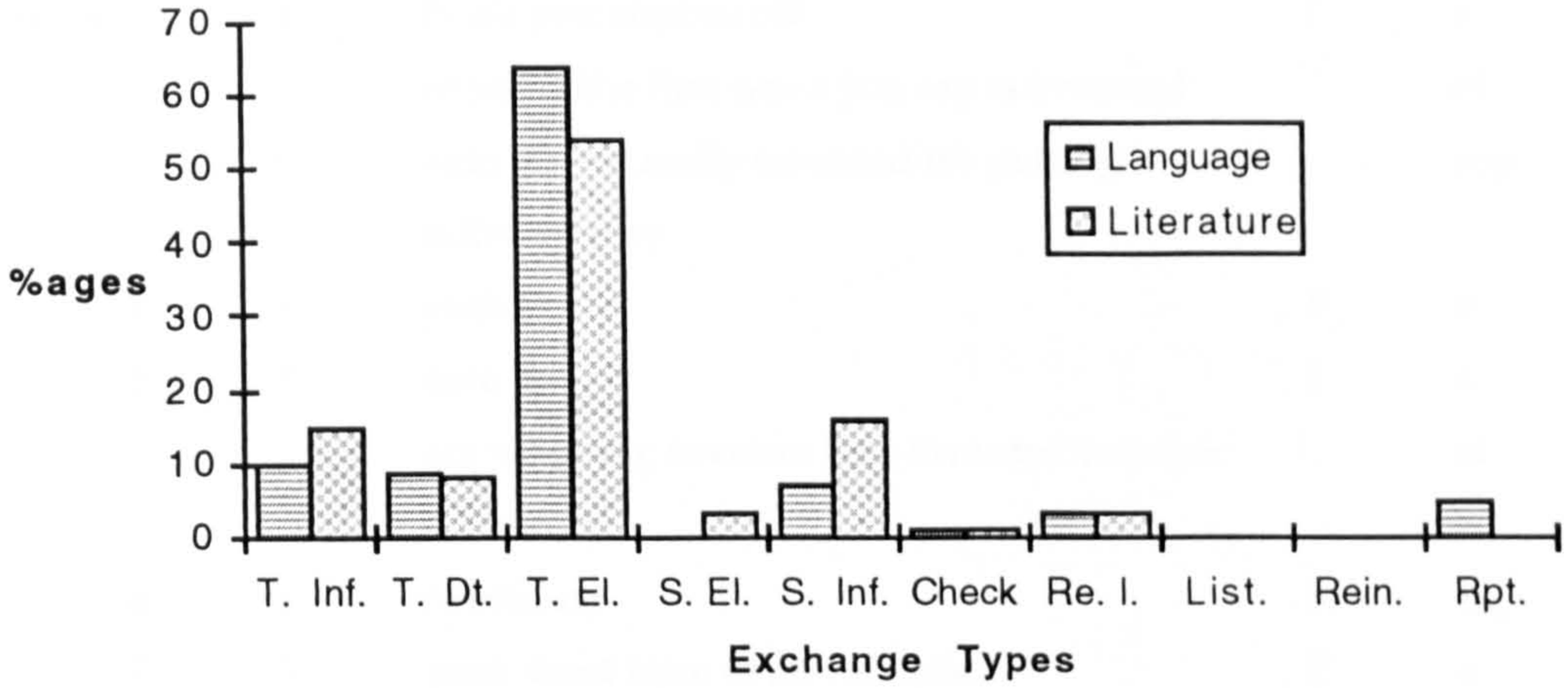
Throughout both lessons, Teacher B worked with the whole class of students on the same text, thereby closely defining the nature and timing of the tasks. As in the earlier lesson observations, the nature of the activities were very limited in scope: both lessons mainly consisted of teacher exposition, teacher directed question-answer exchanges in which one or two students usually took part, short readings of extracts and note taking by the students on points raised (usually by the teacher) in response to the texts.

When the two lessons were transcribed and coded and the frequency of the teaching exchanges quantified for comparison (Table 3), it was found that there was a striking similarity in the distribution and patterning of the exchanges (Figure 4). The findings of the discourse analysis showed that when Teacher B interacted with his students, he worked rigidly within an I-R-F/E structure in both lessons: in his language lesson teacher initiations accounted for 93 percent of the teaching exchanges with 64 percent of this total being made up of teacher elicits; in his literature lesson teacher initiations made up 82 percent of the total teaching exchanges of which 54 percent were teacher elicitation sequences. Interrogating questioning, therefore, was the predominant means by which the teacher controlled the classroom discourse in both lessons. This is also reflected in the distinct lack of any student questions in the English language lesson and *student elicits* making up only 3 percent of the total teaching exchanges in the English literature.

Table 3: Distribution and percentages of Teacher B's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	13/10	12/9	83/64		9/7	1/1	4/3			7/5
Eng. Lit.	18/15	10/8	65/54	4/3	19/16	1/1	4/3			

Figure 4: The patterning of Teacher B's teaching exchanges



The patterning of the discourse in both lessons closely follows a predictable sequence of question-answer in which the parts are nearly always being played out as teacher-student-teacher. Therefore the flow of the dialogue mainly consists of elicitation sequences, initiated and controlled by the teacher through turn-allocation procedures that identify and regulate speakers within the classroom action. The analysis also shows that it was common for a small number of students to monopolise such exchanges and for other students to take little part unless targeted by the teacher.

The following two sequences are typical of the teacher exchanges found in both lessons: the first is taken from the early stages of the language lesson where Teacher B is looking for invented words in the extract from *A Clockwork Orange;* the second is taken from half-way through the literature lesson where he is exploring the evil nature of Iago in *Othello*:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	right	Fr	m
		let's see if we can err agree here upon words	Fs	ms
		and even better if we can identify the parts of		
		speech here ie nouns verbs adjectives adverbs		

		and let's see if some words are now more frequently substituted than others		
Teaching	T	Paula you start us off	I	s
		which is the first word you say is invented		el
3	S	auto it's not really invented it's putting it different way		rep
4	T	yeah	F	e
5	T	auto is are we going to count that invented word or substitute	I	s el
6	S	substitute	R	rep
7	T	yeah short form of automobile actually at one time almost a slang word for a car an auto ok so question mark over that	F	e com

(Teacher B - English language, pp. 2 - 3)

The predictable teacher-student sequence and brief, fast exchanges, which characterises much of Teacher B's interactions with his students is also seen in the second extract:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	alright	Fr	m
Teaching	T	let us look at those words 'hell and night/Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light'	I	s
		dramatically what impact is there		el
3	S	lightening strikes the light's gone	R	rep
4	T	yeah well the night's gone	F	e
5	T	what is it what does it mean particularly for the Elizabethan ages	I	s el
		it's clearly		el
6	S	it's clearly evil	R	rep
7	T	yeah that's it	F	e
		it's saying if I'm evil I know it-I mean it's		com

(Teacher B - English literature, pp. 9-10)

In both extracts, the students are being called on to display their knowledge through responding to teacher-initiated dialogue and questions. Student responses to these elicitations are then either positively or negatively evaluated by the teacher for accuracy, form and appropriateness against some predetermined answer by the teacher. The extracts are also typical in that they are brief and fast exchanges, which again characterise classroom recitation in which the students usually provide brief answers to the teacher's questions. The rapid pace and lack of pauses in the discourse also indicates that there was little time for reflection on the issues under consideration.

As discussed above, the frequency of the three part exchange in each of the two fifty minute lessons, means that student questions are rare: only four questions are asked by students, all of which occur in the English literature lesson. The first curriculum question (Turn 9) arises in the early stages of the lesson when the students are being asked to consider Iago's attitude to women:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	ok	Fr	m
Teaching	T	someone remind me	I	s
		Sue er remind me of what Iago was getting at		el/n
		when he said 'Ere I would say, I would drown		
		myself for the love of a guinea hen, I would		
		change my humanity for a baboon'		
		here's all Iago's language again		com
3	S	it sounds like Roderigo (inaudible)	R	rep
4	T	so who's the guinea-hen	I	el
5	S	Desdemona	R	rep
6	T	and what did we say that meant	I	el
7	S	erm a prostitute	R	rep
8	T	yeah a prostitute a tart	F	e
		it's a view of what other people have seen in a		com
		purist a pure normally in a virgin but to Iago		
		she is or at least Iago talking to Roderigo she's		

		simply a tart		
9	S	but does Iago see all women as tarts	I	el
10	T	ah right does Iago see all women as tarts	R	rep
11	T	when we come to the soliloquy remind me you said that	I	d
12	S	I will	I	i
13	T	great he will	F	z

(Teacher B - English literature, p. 1 - 2)

While the topic is accepted as relevant (Turn 10), it is not considered appropriate at this stage in the lesson by the teacher as it would possibly involve a change of direction and is deferred until a later stage through a *teacher direct* (Turn 11).

Later in the lesson, however, the teacher does return to the topic and this is seen by the student who asked the original question as an opportunity to gain the floor and ask two further questions (Turns 4 and 6) :

Exchange			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	and what does that tell us about remember I was saying about your question from way back	I	s el
2	S	he sees all women as whores	R	rep
3	T	he sees all women as whores so maybe the only view he can take about sex and sexuality is that it is all deceit cuckoldry a suitable tragic storm raging here let's do *King Lear* (In response to rain pounding on window)	F	e com z
4	S	I can't understand why someone like Iago needs an excuse I can't understand	I	el
5	S	he's building a defence	R	rep
6	S	yeah but why does he need to convince himself he's not that sort of person I don't think it's got a function really if it's got a function	I	el
7	S	maybe he's building a defence against Roderigo	I	i
8	T	I think you've both in a sense got very good	F	e

points

(Teacher B - English literature, p. 12)

Although Teacher B briefly allowed room for the student's questions, which in turn is taken up and responded to by another student (Turns 5 and 7), the topic is not opened up and developed: instead it is brought to a close through an evaluation (Turn 8) and the introduction of another topic. This illustrates the control the teacher has over the discourse because of his unequal 'right' to manage the turn-taking and to determine as the 'expert' what is relevant or appropriate to the business at hand. Therefore alternative frames of reference introduced by the students, as in the above examples, can be accepted, rejected or deferred. The only other occasion in the lesson when a student asks a question it is seen by the teacher as a display of ignorance and quickly dismissed:

Exchange			Move	Acts
Boundary	T	let's leave that	I	ms
Teaching	T	your still surprising me a bit by not having	I	i
3	S	it's Shakespeare	I	i
4	T	yeah it's Shakespeare	F	acc
		I thought you might (inaudible)		com
5	T	listen 'I hate the Moor/And it is thought abroad		
		that 'twixt my sheets/He has done my office	I	el
6	S	sounds a bit dodgy that	R	rep
7	S	does that mean (inaudible)	I	el
8	T	I don't believe this	R	z
		no I don't think so		rep

(Teacher B - English literature, p.10)

Overall, the analysis of the patterning of the teaching exchanges shows that Teacher B does not vary his style when teaching across the two English subjects at A-level showing a mismatch with his stated objectives for teaching the two subjects in his interview. The findings suggests he is very didactic in his teaching

style across both subjects with recitation being a dominant feature in both lessons. This means that Teacher B interprets meanings by retaining control over the discourse and frames of reference which militates against the more 'open' style of seminar teaching which he claimed he was trying to foster at this level. Contrary to his stated aim, he is the only participant in the discourse who is allowed to interpret and explore alternative readings of the texts because the students are given little opportunity to make independent and personal responses to texts.

6.4 Teacher C Analysis

Teacher C was in his ninth year of teaching and had been teaching A-level English literature for six years (AEB 652) assessed by terminal examination and A-level English language for two years (London Board, 9174) with 30 percent coursework.

In his interview about his teaching of the two English subjects at A-level, like the two previous teachers, he thought there were distinct differences in aims and teaching and learning styles because English language draws on the study of linguistics and has a much broader definition of what constitutes a text. Therefore he thought it had a different ideology to English literature where the literary canon was given a much higher status rather than being just another form of language study. This in turn led to differences in teaching approaches. While acknowledging that the comparatively large size of his English literature group (23 students) influenced the way he taught literature, he felt the main differences in teaching style were due to the fact that his literature lessons were often based around a shared literary text in which he directed most of the work leaving little opportunity for discussion:

'With the literature obviously it's book centred and with the group I've got a large part of it has to be. Well it's very rare having a whole class discussion going on of any extended whole class discussion which I can do with the language group you know because it's a small manageable group but ordinarily you know we've got the book in front of us. We study the text and we work on themes and issues coming from it.'

In contrast to this, he thought his English language lessons were more student-centred, not only because of the group size (8 students) but also because of the nature of the subject and its approach to texts, in which he allowed more discussion and made greater use of the students' own experiences of language:

> 'I think you rely, I think I rely on the response of the students a lot more in the language and how they react to the situations that we set up whereas in the literature you know they've got this base in the text that they know they've got to study, that they know even if they can't see it that the answers in there somewhere whereas with the language it can come from anywhere any situation and the different types of media that we use you know tapes, TV, radio, any written text.'

Teacher C also thought that he was perceived as being more of an expert in his literature lessons, interpreting meanings and with the authority of his interpretations being reinforced by the authority of the literary text. In his language lessons, however, he thought he was perceived as being less of an authority because of his own developing knowledge of the subject and its investigative and descriptive approach which meant that he drew far more on the students' everyday knowledge and opinions. He therefore thought English language was more accessible to the students because the boundary between subject knowledge and everyday knowledge was less sharply defined:

> 'The present upper sixth are the first group I've taken through and so I made that clear so then, so in a sense we've gone this journey together whereas and so we've help each other quite a lot in the language class. I'm not adverse to saying that I don't know and we'll try and find out as we

work our way through things whereas with the literature they expect me to have a wealth of knowledge behind me. There seems to be an assumption that it is there and I suppose that affects the way I teach whereas I would with the language group I would be much more on a level, we're on the same level working towards these things to a certain extent. I try and use the depth of knowledge that I should have in the literature group although they still, both groups still point out where I might have things wrong or they might not agree with me.'

Teacher C also thought that the spoken language project in the London syllabus, worth a third of the marks, played a significant role in promoting more of a student-centred approach in his language teaching because of the need for more consultation and group collaboration.

Analysis of lesson

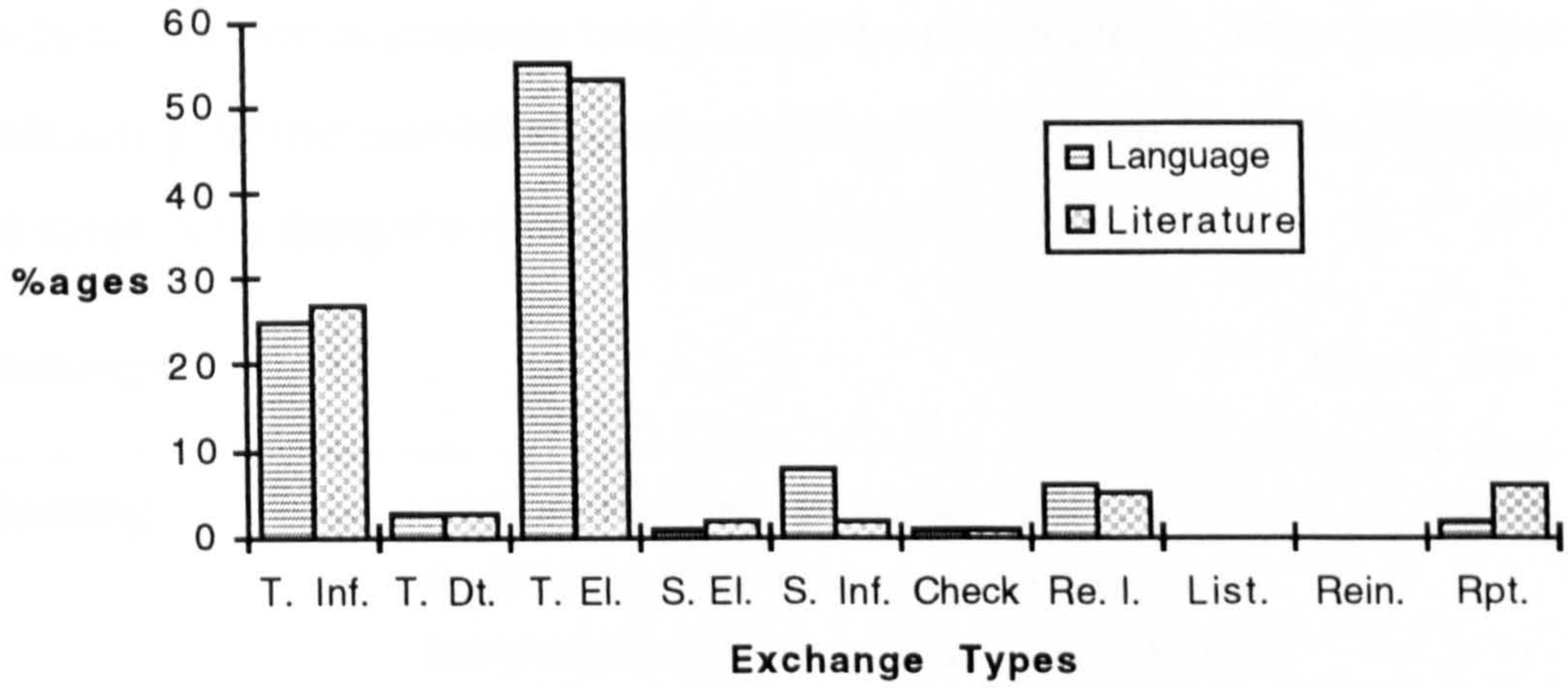
Teacher C's lessons were sixty minutes in length. The English language lesson consisted of eight year 13 students who were in their fifth term of the course. It was concerned with the history of spelling and attempts at its reform (Appendix 4). The English literature lesson was made up of twenty three year 12 students who were in their second term of the course and was centred around a chapter from *Oranges are not the only fruit* by Jeanette Winterton entitled 'Numbers'. In structure, both lessons followed the format of those observed prior to filming: the teacher worked with the whole class of students on the same text at the same time, thereby defining the nature and timing of the tasks. This meant there was a limited range of activities, as with the previous two teachers, in both subjects: teacher explanation and teacher-directed question-answer exchanges, together with the reading of short extracts and student note-taking (again usually teacher directed), dominated both lessons.

These observations are supported by the analysis of the discourse. The quantification and distribution of the teaching exchanges in both lessons are shown in Table 4 and the patterning of the exchanges is illustrated in Figure 5.

Table 4: Distribution and percentages of Teacher C's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	32/25	4/3	69/55	1/1	10/8	1/1	7/6			2/2
Eng. Lit.	24/27	3/3	47/53	2/2	2/2	1/1	4/5			5/6

Figure 5: The patterning of Teacher C's teaching exchanges



The striking similarity of the patterning of the teaching exchanges provides salient evidence of the teacher's style and suggests that he does not vary his approach when working across the two A-level English subjects as stated in his interview. In both lessons he works strongly within an I-R-F/E framework, with the majority of the initiations being made up of *teacher elicits* and *teacher informs* (accounting for 80 percent of the teaching exchanges in both subjects). Therefore Teacher C leaves little space for student initiatives and the opportunity to challenge and introduce alternative frames of reference so that they are obliged to work within the teacher's epistemological frame of reference and answer questions at his bidding. This is reflected in the low percentage of *student elicits*

and *student informs* in both lessons (totalling 9 percent of the teaching exchanges in language and 4 percent in literature).

The overall patterning of the teaching exchanges therefore suggests both lessons are characterised by recitation rather than discussion: the teacher rigidly controls the discourse and frame of reference by asking most of the questions; the students' moves are mainly brief responses with the function of suggesting possible answers to his questions, which in turn are usually evaluated.
In the English literature lesson, because of the size of the group (23 in number), the Teacher C makes greater use of *nomination* acts to allocate turns or invites bids than is normally the case at this level although for a majority of the time only a minority of students take part in the proceedings. This can be seen in the following extract considering an amusing section from Jeanette Winterton's chapter describing the church service taken by Pastor Finch:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	and then they start this service there's a great deal of singing erm Pastor Finch has written a new hymn 'You don't need spirit when you've got the spirit' dealing with the evils of drink and it really inspires the whole congregation they have a wonderful time (reads)'Before long we were all in a long line going clockwise round the church singing the chorus over and over again' really enjoying themselves full of the spirit as they would call it	I	s i
2	T	the only person who is not taking part is whom Annabelle	I	el n
3	S	Melanie	R	rep
4	T	yeah Melanie	F	e
5	T	why isn't Melanie taking part do you think	I	el

6	S	she's not use to like obsessive people at her church like Pastor Finch	R	rep
7	T	she says at her church err is very quiet where does she say that (reads)'She did not go to a lively one' certainly she's not use to it to this type of religious worship	F	e com
8	T	erm and I think there's another reason as well how would you react if you were the only one or someone new to a church when everyone else was up singing and dancing doing almost a conga round church would you join in Natalie would you join in	I	s el el n/el
9	S	no	R	rep
10	T	you'd sit there and how would you feel	I	el
11	S	stupid	R	rep
12	T	you'd feel embarrassed yes because you wouldn't want perhaps to feel erm you didn't know these people but then you'd feel even more embarrassed because you were the only one not joining in so you'd be in an awful position so that perhaps is how Melanie is feeling this time	F	e com
13	T	and they all get really carried away how does it stop	I	s el
14	S	Mrs Rothwell fell down	R	rep
15	T	yes it doesn't stop till somebody fell over they get so carried away that they forget themselves and eventually they almost pass out	F	e com
16	T	subtle humour coming through all the way through Jeanette pointing out the humorous side of this obviously Jeanette getting so carried away that (reads)'It was only then that I noticed Melanie hadn't joined in'	I	s i

(Teacher C - English literature, pp. 8 - 9)

Here the *nomination acts* are used to involve more students in the centralised form of teacher/student talk and keep them attending to what is being said. This task is made easier with the eight students in the language lesson where the closer proximity of the teacher to the students means he can make greater use of paralinguistic features to allocate the turn or invite bids from students and to use eye contact to keep them involved. The brevity of the students' reponses also contrasts with the elaboration of the teacher's comments and often long and elaborate explanations as he is seen as the expert who provides a more or less continuous interpretative framework for what is going on in the lesson.

The large difference in the size of the language group, however, does not bring about a change in teaching style nor change Teacher C's control over the turn-taking and topic to allow for a more 'open' pattern of communication: here the 'teacher-taking-every-other-turn' format is also a prominent feature, allowing the students little opportunity to formulate their own meanings and introduce alternative frames of reference. Again the pace and volume of the teacher's questioning means that they are often factual questions eliciting mainly recalls of information from the students because there is so little space left for reasoning, reflection or thinking aloud. This is illustrated in the following extract from the start of the English language lesson considering English spelling rules:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	spelling English spelling is based upon lots of rules and exceptions	I	s
		can anyone think of any spelling rules they've learnt		el
2	S	*i* before *e*	R	rep
3	T	i before e	F	e
4	S	except after *c* is that right	I	i
5	T	anything else to it	I	el
		i before e except after *c* is *e*		cl
6	S	only if the sound is *e*	R	rep
7	T	only if the sound is *e*	F	e

8	T	we get words like *receive* and *conceive* the *e* sound is *i* before *e* normally but after *c* becomes *ea*	I	s
		if for example that *e* sound that you mentioned Carmel phonographically represented by an */i:/* but in words like *sheep* and *seep* the sound is double *e* but it can also be spelled in a number of different ways		i
9	T	can you think of a number of words that have got the */i:/* sound in them	I	s
		which		el
		think of any		el
		you should really		p
		I'll make a list of words on the board		com
		you've got some but it'll be easier if you could tell me some just words with e in that sound */i:/*		el
10	S	*leaf*	R	rep
11	T	*leaf*	F	e
		so the *ea* sound		com
12	S	*meat* as in the food	I	i
13	T	again that's the same *ea* isn't it	F	e
14	T	any others	I	el
15	S	*chief*	R	rep
16	T	*chief* that's the *ie* sound	F	e
17	T	anyone else	I	s
		what do you think		el
18	S	*teak* as in the wood	R	rep
19	T	*teak*	F	e
		is that the *ea* sound again		com

(Teacher C - English language, p. 2)

Here the students are limited to brief answers which are evaluated and shaped by the teacher in the light of what he wants the students to say. In other words, as the accepted 'expert' he is perceived as having prior or superior knowledge of the topic and asking questions to which he already knows the answer having established the parameters for a correct answer within his frame of reference.

However, towards end of the lesson, the teacher briefly moves away from this communicative pattern and asks genuine questions while translating a passage with the students which has been written in the Shavian alphabet. Like the students he does not appear to know the answers and is therefore much more tentative in his approach:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	has anybody worked out what that word is after 'But in a'	I	el
2	S	we think it's large	R	rep
3	T	large [1-]	F	acc
4	T	how do you get there	I	el
5	S	erm the first half of the symbol is (inaudible)	R	rep
6	T	from the *a* in all	I	el
7	S	no the third line	R	rep
8	T	oh the third line sorry I'm looking in the wrong place	F	com
		yeah [1-]		acc
9	S	the *a g* from there	I	i
10	T	which is *r*	I	i
11	S	and the second half is (inaudible)	I	i
12	T	right so it's joined those two up	F	com
		yeah [1-]		acc
13	T	so you've got r	I	s
		that's an extended r almost isn't it		el
14	S	yeah	R	rep
15	T	*n d* then *a g* obviously	I	s
		what's the the end of		el
16	S	not sure	R	rep
17	S	I've got larger	I	i
18	T	oh you've got large larger	F	com
19	T	erm where do you get the larger	I	el
20	S	erm	R	rep
21	T	was it *a* in *ado*	I	el
22	S	*ado*	F	rep
23	T	right 1-]	F	acc

24	S	r as in in row	I	i
25	T	with the r as in row ok	F	e
		but in a larger sense you've got		com

(Teacher C - English language, pp. 21 - 22)

In this part of the lesson, there is a rare relaxation of control over the pedagogic agenda and the meanings being exchanged, with the teacher allowing for alternative suggestions beyond his frame of reference. The patterning of the discourse therefore takes on a less asymmetrical appearance. There is also a notable absence of evaluations of the students' answers by the teacher indicated by the *accepts* and almost half of the *student informs* occur at this stage in the lesson (Turns 9, 11, 17, 24). Generally, however, in this small-group teaching situation (with eight students), the teacher works within a tight I-R-F/E format and there is little evidence, beyond the above example, of him using a more open discourse structure to initiate discussion despite the opportunities for doing so. The discourse analysis of the language lesson therefore does not support Teacher C's view, expressed in his interview, that he makes greater use of the students' own knowledge and experience as language users.

The analysis of the discourse also suggests that the size of the group makes little difference to Teacher C's pedagogic style: the smaller number of students in the language lesson does not result in an easing of his pedagogic agenda to allow for more interplay between alternative frames of reference. Student initiations and questions are therefore rare with only one procedural question occurring in the language lesson in which a student asks if she should write the Shavian alphabet out in standard English.

Similarly, in the English literature class, there are only two *student elicits*, both of which occur towards the end of the lesson over a mythical fable with which the chapter ends:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	but something is waiting to come something is going to destroy this inside everything goes on as normal (reads)'Father and son. Father and son' self perpetuating (reads)'It's always been this way, nothing can intrude' nothing can break that security inside (reads) "Father, son and holy ghost. Outside, the rebels are waiting to storm the Winter Palace' so outside influences are going to come in and destroy whatever is there inside	I	i
2	S	sir is the Winter Palace a reference to a new place	I	el
3	T	a new place erm I'm not certain	R	rep
4	T	what Winter Palaces do you think it could be in	I	el
5	S	there's a hotel called the Winter Palace	R	rep
6	T	there's a hotel called called the Winter Palace it could be	F	e
		perhaps we need to see if we could find out if there is a Winter Palace that they specifically refer to		com
7	S	isn't that just a reference to the relationship between Jeanette and Melanie	I	el
8	T	who are the rebels	I	el
9	S	people who are getting ready to break them up	R	rep
10	T	do you think Jeanette and Melanie are in the Winter Palace	I	el
11	S	they're the Winter Palace	R	rep
12	T	it's cold in there don't you think for Jeanette and Melanie it would be a warm loving place not a cold winter palace where the women suffer most erm and everything is embalmed	I	s
		embalmed is err		s
		what happens what type of things get embalmed		el
13	S	dead things	R	rep
14	T	dead things yeah	F	e
15	T	there's no life in this image is there	I	s

I think it's a representation of the church that her mother goes to which soldiers on ignoring everything else around it pretending to have all this warmth in it but it doesn't really it's only when the outside influences come in and shake up the err cosiness of the situation that things are going to get a little bit rough and that's the rebels storming the Winter Palace I presume that they're referring to this relationship between Melanie and Jeanette which is going to have a profound effect upon the whole church in the next few chapters i

(Teacher C English literature, pp. 20-22)

Given the ambiguity of the meaning of the fable, a student initiates an interpretation of what the Winter Palace could represent through a question (Turn 2); this is picked by the teacher in which he asks a genuine follow-up question to develop the student's contribution (Turn 4). This in turn encourages another student to ask a question and suggest a further interpretation (Turn 7) which is followed by two more probing questions from the teacher (Turns 8 and 10). However, the discussion is not developed and the lesson is quickly brought back to the teacher's frame of reference through a question (Turn 12) and an *informing exchange* (Turn 15) in which Teacher C gives an authoritative interpretation of what the image means, thereby asserting his claim to define the knowledge and manage the interaction. Indeed, throughout both lessons, the students are mainly receivers of knowledge with little opportunity, as in the above example, to initiate challenges to the teacher's epistemological frame of reference so that a clear boundary is set-up between their ignorance and the expertise of the teacher.

Overall, therefore, the findings of the discourse analysis shows a mismatch between Teacher C's perception of how he teaches the two A-level English

subjects and his actual classroom practice. The analysis suggests he is heavily didactic in his teaching and that group size or subject content does not make any difference to his pedagogic style which shows little variation across the two subjects.

6.5 Teacher D Analysis

Teacher D had been teaching for thirty years during which time he had mainly taught traditional A-level English literature syllabuses. For the past five years, however, he had gained experience of teaching an English literature syllabus (NEAB English literature, syllabus C) with a 50 percent coursework option and for three years had been involved in the teaching of English language (NEAB) also assessed by 50 percent coursework.

When interviewed about this teaching of the two subjects, Teacher D thought that they were taught differently because of differences in aims and content. He thought this was mainly due to fact that A-level English language viewed all texts as worthy of study and that it drew on more of the language resources and everyday knowledge of the students. He also thought there was more of a vocational orientation because of the way it combined the study of the nature and functions of language with learning how to use it more effectively:

> 'It encourages just about every kind of writing and consideration of language. You know, the various functions of the language to entertain, persuade, inform, instruct and so on. Under those broad aims you can branch out into all sorts of avenues. You rely upon enquiry rather than theory and regurgitation, received opinion and what have you. Insofar as they all use language and you can turn to their very use of it to give you so much material in terms of analysing speech, analysing different registers in writing, and what have you.'

Generally, he thought English language was more forward thinking and less restrictive because of the way it challenged the privilege status of English literature. However, in recent years he felt there had also been shift in English literature towards more of a student-centred form of learning, or 'spirit of individual enquiry', and a move away from 'received critical opinion', because of the coursework element which allowed students to 'pursue their own wide reading and to negotiate and discuss that.' On the whole though, he thought that the language was much more 'enquiry based', drawing more on the students' prior knowledge, which led to distinct teaching styles between the two subjects:

> There are (differences) in that I am, for the bulk of the time on literature, handling specific texts, whether I'm working on a theme or an aspect of a text, or simply pushing chapters or acts forward, I know that I am focusing on that particular text. In language that's not the text, I am taking into one lesson an advert and we could be analysing the language of advertising. The next time I could be going in and looking at something to do with accent or whatever. They will bring their own material in and a lot of the time is spent in small group work with their sharing their thoughts on the material and then making a little presentation to the rest of the group about it with me just overseeing and controlling.'

Teacher D therefore thought English language represented a shift in paradigm in A-level English teaching away from the domination of literary values towards an empirical investigation and descriptions of language in everyday use. In contrast to this, in his literature teaching he felt that he took more of an authoritative approach because 'as a teacher I can't resist giving my own evaluation and my own interpretation' . He still, however, tried to encourage student discussion so that they could explore their own ideas and interpretations. Overall, though, he reported that 'I still find it more difficult than I should to shut up. I often say in the lesson that they are going to do it and I'm going to shut up. Then I find myself talking. I'm sure lots of teachers find that.'

Lesson Analysis

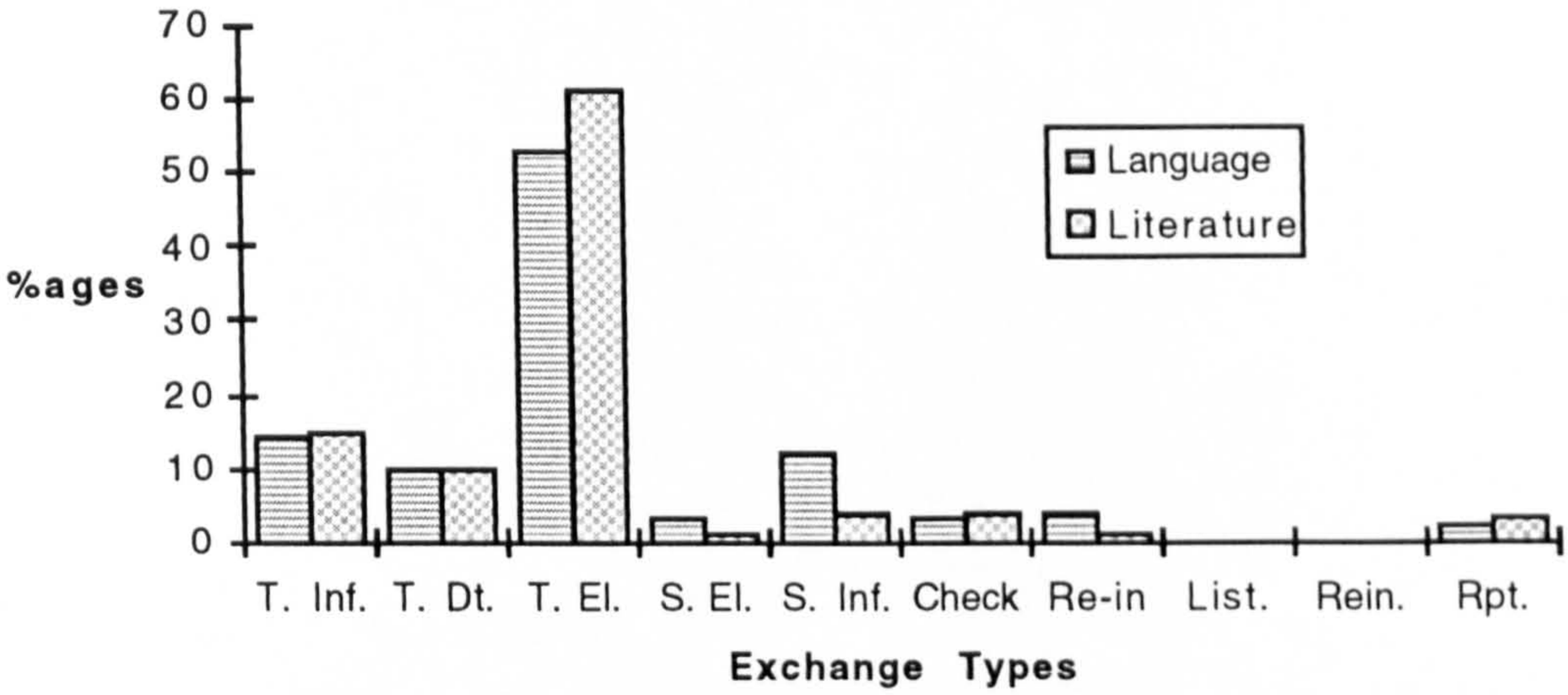
Teacher D's lessons were fifty minutes in length. The language class was made up of twelve year 13 students who were in their final term of study. The lesson was centred around a question from a past examination paper analysing the use of language to establish points about character, relationships and themes in an extract from *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne (Appendix 5). The literature lesson was with a year 12 group made up of 16 students who were their second term of the course and studying the mechanicals scene (Act 1, Scene 2) from *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Throughout most of the literature lesson the teacher worked with the whole class except for ten minutes when the students were divided into two groups to read and discuss how the scene could be performed; this followed the pattern of earlier lesson observations. In the language lesson, after a ten minute introduction, the teacher worked with half the class for the first twenty minutes while the headteacher, who was appraising the lesson, worked with the other half. In the two previous language lessons, Teacher D had worked with the whole group for the majority of the time. The teacher's interactions with the half group of students were recorded and included in the overall analysis of the teaching exchanges. The analysis and quantification of the teaching exchanges from both of Teacher D's lessons is shown in Table 5 below and the patterning of the exchanges is illustrated in Figure 6.

Table 5: Distribution and percentages of Teacher D's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	21/14	15/10	82/53	4/3	19/12	4/3	6/4			3/2
Eng. Lit.	14/15	10/10	59/61	1/1	4/4	4/4	1/1			3/3

Figure 6: The patterning of Teacher D's teaching exchanges



The analysis of the lessons reveals a high degree of similarity in the patterning of the teaching exchanges and suggests that Teacher D worked rigidly within an I-R-F/E structure during both lessons. Teacher initiations account for 95% of the teaching exchanges in the English literature lesson and 85% of the exchanges in the English language lesson, and over half of the exchanges in each of the lessons are made up of *teacher elicits* . This contrasts sharply with the very low level of *student elicits* (1 percent in literature and 3 percent in language).

The slight variation in student informing exchanges between the two lessons (12 percent in language, 4 percent in literature) may be related to the fact that in the language lesson Teacher D worked with a half group for the first twenty minutes during which time most of the student informing exchanges occurred. This is illustrated in the following extract from the lesson where he is working with the six students on how language is used to establish points about Jimmy's character:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	let me just pull this together with a few final questions because they're touching the same ground over there I would suggest	I	s
		what do you think of Jimmy here		el
2	S	he's bigoted as well	R	rep
3	T	go on evidence	I	p
4	S	well he just writes off anything that you're saying and he thinks he's always right all the time	R	rep
5	T	put that down Mark	I	d
6	T	any other words to err to attach to Jimmy	I	el
7	S	pretentious	R	rep
8	T	pretentious	F	e
9	T	put that one down as well	I	d
10	T	I'm going to ask you to think of things to go with these later on	I	s
11	T	bullying domineering yes arrogant conceited yes important		i
12	S	cynical	I	i
13	S	he's quite intelligent as well	I	i
14	T	go on then	I	s
		you see now I was wondering what you were going to say on the plus side you get the impression he's alive yes intelligent		s
		where do you think that his education would have taken him		el
		do you think he would have gone through to degree level		el
15	S	I doubt it not if he's running a sweet shop	R	rep
16	T	not if he's running a	I	l
17	S	sweet stall	R	rep
18	T	urm hum	F	e
19	S	he's probably quite backward in other things he's quite bitter about them you know about the chance of er	I	i
20	T	bitter you think there's some bitterness there alright urm hum	F	com e

21	T	we've got to amplify these Clare can you think of anything you want to say about it	I	s el /n
22	S	erm he's got a strong character	R	rep
23	T	yeah [1+] strong very strong	F	e com
24	T	does he like the sound of his own voice	I	el
24	S	yeah	R	rep
26	T	yes [1+] there's plenty of evidence of that he won't shut up will he he won't shut up he keeps blooming droning on as Cliff says	F	e com

(Teacher D - English language, pp. 14 - 15)

Although the students seem to be offering more information at this stage in the lesson, they are still operating strictly within Teacher D's interpretative framework against which he evaluates their contributions for relevance and worth and from which he asks further questions. At no point in the language lesson do the students really challenge the teacher's more or less continuous interpretation of the text, except at one stage, again when the teacher is working with the group of six students. All four student questions occur at this stage. The first occurs (Turn 2) because of a student's misreading of the stage directions which results in a public display of his ignorance following Teacher D's explanation of Cliff's relationship to Jimmy and Alison:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	Cliff's caught in the middle ground and trying to find yes a way through the whole thing he works with Jimmy and you know he's subjected to this ear thing he's called him a rotten sadist yes he doesn't mean that literally it's the language that would come out of the situation isn't it yes you lousy swine you rotten sadist or something of that nature	I	i

2	S	why does he say why does he say rotten sadist to Alison	I	el
3	T	he never then he turns to Alison I think that is it Dan (reads) 'That hurt you rotten sadist' then he turns to Alison and says 'I wish you'd kick his head in for him'	R	rep
4	T	yeah yes	I	el
5	S	yeah	R	rep
6	T	and the language is colloquial there isn't it I mean you know kick your head in when you look through there's a lot of colloquialisms in this idiom is another word which is a point I want to pick up on otherwise it becomes a straight forward piece of literary appreciation or		

(Teacher D - English language, p. 17)

The other three *student elicits* occur straight after this and arise (Turns 1, 3 and 5) because of confusion over a misprint in the text:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	what does he mean when he says a female Emily Bronte	I	el
2	T	anybody a sort of feeling of reluctance I think it's to do I think it's to do with the kind of spirited nature of the woman	R	rep
3	S	the demands type of thing	I	el
4	T	yeah he's sort of a female Emily Bronte which doesn't mean female does he he means male it should have a male it's a sort of male Emily Bronte	R	rep
5	S	what do we do after that put a question mark next to that in an exam	I	el
6	T	oh I see yeah it's only just dawned on me	R	rep
7	T	Frank any observations I'll bring you in on this now	I	s
		(reads) a sort of female Emily Bronte		s

		it means male Emily Bronte doesn't it		el
		(reads) 'I'm not talking about Webster' he's		com
		talking about him and his mates' a sort of		
		female Emily Bronte'		
8	S	she's already female	I	i
9	T	she's already female	F [1-]	acc
		I don't know		com

(Teacher D - English language pp. 17-18)

Unlike in the 'normal' patterning of the classroom discourse, the teacher here does not know the answer (Turn 7) because of the unexpected error in the text and for a brief moment he suspends his pedagogic agenda and speculates on the matter. Generally though, the teacher works within an I-R-F/E format whether he is talking to the whole class of twelve students or working with the group of six, so the number of participants seems to make little difference to his teaching style.

Indeed, throughout both his lessons, the vast majority of the initiations are the teacher's who, through the extensive use of questions, specifies and directs the topics and defines understanding of the task. In other word, the teacher has set the pedagogic agenda and usually determined in advance what the knowledge outcomes should be. Rather than being a form of group interaction, as was assumed by the teacher in his interview, where people talk back-and-forth with one another about an issue, advancing and examining different proposals in order to arrive at an answer or enhance their knowledge, understanding, appreciation or judgement, the teacher is usually transmitting ideas and information through closed questions thereby shaping the students' understanding of the issues too exclusively according to his frame of reference.

The students therefore get little opportunity in the language lesson to construct their own meanings in ways which build on individual experience as he stated in

his interview. Teacher D's use of the I-R-F/E format makes them reliant on his definition of relevance, appropriateness and correctness as in the following extract, again taken from the English language, which is typical of the way the teacher uses elicitation sequences to control the frame of reference:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	and he uses another comparison down at the bottom	I	el
2	S	Ulysses	R	rep
3	T	yeah	F	e
4	T	what do you think about that comparison 'Even to sit on the top of a bus with her was like setting out with Ulysses'	I	s
		why Ulysses		s
		what's the purpose of that particular thing		el
		I mean where does he lift it from		el
5	S	James Joyce	R	rep
6	T	how is it James Joyce	I	el
7	S	I don't know or is it that err	R	rep
8	T	the classical	R-I	cl
9	S	the classical hero	R	rep
10	T	classical hero we're on an epic voyage-yes	F	e
11	T	it's like an epic adventure sitting on the top of the	I	s
		is that over the top that image do you think		el
12	S	yeah but it's just the way he sees it in comparison	R	rep
13	T	exactly right	F	e
		it's got an almost comic effect hasn't it it's a double act yes		com

(Teacher D - English language, pp. 8 - 9)

Here the student provides an answer which is outside the teacher's frame of reference (Turn 5) but which might have provided an opportunity to explore the student's alternative suggestion of a literary allusion. However, the teacher

quickly brings it back his pedagogic agenda by providing additional information in the form of a *re-initiation exchange* (Turn 8) to help the student provide the 'correct' answer to the original question. Through his evaluations of the students' answers, the teacher demonstrates the point that there are certain 'correct' answers which he has in mind when he asks a question. Therefore the teacher is seen in an examining rather than a collaborative role and through the evaluative move he offers evidence as to what an appropriate answer should look like. The brevity of the student's response contrasts with the teacher's much longer contributions and reflects the general patterning of the discourse throughout both lessons where the students are expected to play a relatively passive role by listening to the teacher.

Teacher D often appears to be asking 'complex' questions but, as Dillon (1994) argues, in recitation it is not the question itself which is important but the student coming up with an appropriate answer. In other words for the student as responder the questions are no more than a request for information which does not require advanced cognition. All that is usually required from the student is a brief answer which reflects back what is in the teacher's mind. This is illustrated in the following extract from the English literature lesson. Teacher D's stated objective was to get the students to actively explore the characters in the mechanicals scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by getting them to stage the scene. However, because of Teacher D's questioning technique, what should have been a problem for the students soon becomes a problem for the teacher with the students having to work out what is in his mind:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	ok	Fr	m
Teaching	T	let's move on	I	d
3	T	we've discussed Bottom then	I	s
		let's come over here and ask Quince		s
		who's Quince here		el

		what kind of person do you think you are		el
4	S	erm very sort of calm and trying to keep	R	rep
5	T	urm hum	F	e
6	T	but you've already suggested you can't win with Bottom	I	el
7	S	well you've just got to (inaudible)	R	rep
8	T	you see I think you get Bottom to do what you want him to do in here	I	s
		which is what		el
		what do you want Bottom to do Quince		el
9	S	erm play the role you've given him	R	rep
10	T	which was that of	I	el
11	S	Pyramus	R	rep
12	T	Pyramus the lover yes	F	e
13	T	how do you get Bottom in the end to accept that he's going to do that	I	s
		look at the bit where you get Bottom to do that		cl
		canI share with you where does it come where you actually get Bottom to do that part		el
14	S	line seventy three	R	rep
15	T	line	I	l
16	S	seventy three	R	rep
17	T	it's whether it's the first part you distribute isn't it Pyramus and it's the last one that you eventually get settled	I	s
		now doesn't that that does tell you something about Bottom doesn't it that he interrupts that he interferes that wants to be everything		s
		he's full of life		
		I've also seen a production incidentally where he's a thorough pain in the neck he's irritation to everyone as they want to get on with it and he won't let them		s
		but how is it handled at the bottom of page fifty one by Quince		el
18	S	he tries to make him sound really good so that erm he's one of the best you know he's the best person in the play	R	rep
19	T	yeah	F	e

20	T	so what is he using as a technique	I	s
		what is he using		el
21	S	he just praises Pyramus so it looks as if it's	R	rep
		the best part		
22	T	right yeah	F	e
23	T	and therefore	I	s
		you still haven't got the word I want		el
24	S	he's flattering him	R	rep
25	T	he's	I	l
26	S	flattering him	R	rep
27	T	yeah he is flattering him isn't he	F	e
		and saying that there's nobody here but you		com
		who can do this		
28		and look what Bottom's reply is top of that	I	s
		page		
		you know you might pause for a moment		i
		and think to keep him on a knife's		
		edge well you know I will undertake it you		
		know big of you you know I'll do it but		
		you've got Quince yes you've got the cast		
		that you wanted at that point but you had		
		to flatter him in order to do it		

(Teacher D - English Literature, pp. 14 - 16)

In this extract the teacher is often seen building up to an elicitation through starter acts (e.g. Turn 17) designed to help the students arrive at the 'correct' answer, and this kind of questioning sequence is routinely produced throughout both lessons. If the question is not answered to the teacher's satisfaction, the teacher can 'reformulate' the question and go on doing so until an acceptable answer has been achieved (Turn 20 -27). The extract also illustrates the length of turn (e.g. Turn 17 and 28) which the teacher usually takes compared to the students' brief responses, and which often develops into a mini-lecture, giving him an unequal share of the talking space to the detriment of all other participants.

Overall, the findings suggest that both lessons are dominated by a combination of teacher-presentation and teacher directed question-and-answer with little variation in teaching style despite Teacher D's use of drama in his literature lesson and small-group work in language. Such activities did not seem to have a beneficial effect on the level of student involvement in the discourse. Therefore Teacher D's reliance on didactic methods seems to contradict his perceptions of how he teaches the two subjects and confirms his suspicion that 'I often say in the lesson that they are going to do it and I'm going to shut up. Then I find myself talking. I'm sure lots of teachers find that'.

6.6 Teacher E Analysis

Teacher E was in his ninth year of teaching and had been teaching A-level English literature for seven years. Since changing schools four years ago, he had gained experience of teaching an A-level English language (NEAB) and English literature syllabus (NEAB, syllabus C) both with 50 percent coursework.

When asked about his perceptions of teaching the two subjects, Teacher E felt there were distinctive differences in aims and content because English language combined learning about the nature and function of language in human thought and communication with learning how to use English in its spoken and written forms more effectively. As a result of this emphasis, he thought that A-level English language had more of a vocational appeal and attracted less able students. In contrast to this, English literature was much narrower in its focus and appealed to those who enjoyed reading because of its emphasis on developing an appreciation and personal response to literature. Teacher E therefore thought, like the four previous teachers, there had been a shift in subject paradigm in A-level English teaching away from the domination of literary studies. He felt that A-level English language challenged the ideology of

literature syllabuses by removing the special status they assign to the traditional canon:

> 'I feel from attending training sessions that there is almost an ideological slant to the A-level language course and that is to kind of to move away from this idea of traditional canon based. There are types of writing, certain types of speaking which are acceptable and if you like you know to take a view of all texts as being of equal value and being of if not of equal interest all texts are of interest and worthy of study. The history of English has been dominated by literary studies. I mean if you take on the idea of texts as being of all texts as being of equal value well then literary texts are just one aspect of a huge range of you know written and spoken material which is worthy of study within English/communication whatever you want to term it.'

He thought this also brought about differences in the way he taught the two subjects:

> 'When approaching a literature syllabus I would tend to be in a sense more didactic in my approach because you're studying a certain number of texts for an exam. In an exam there are a certain elements, theme, a style, those sorts of stylistic or content, all aspects which you know that you have to put your students through those sorts of hoops and in a sense there comes a stage where you teach those in a, in a theoretical way. The language syllabus, although there is some of that, some of the theoretical aspects might have to be approached in that way, there's much more a sense of in group investigative approaches and that is because I don't think there is the same there's not the same content in the language course as there is in the literature course. In language you're teaching them approaches to texts and that is best done through dealing with texts and dealing with texts through you know collaborative discussion in discursive ways. Fifty percent coursework, well that's allowed a lot more scope for those sorts of approaches in language as well because the project and the original writing are individually based and there tends to be a lot more in terms of individual tutorial work as well.'

As discussed above, Teacher E thought that the need to teach about literary techniques and values, in order to prepare students to write critical literary

essays for the final examination, meant that he taught literature in more of an authoritative and didactic way. However, the wider reading coursework in literature did allow 'for a more individual, negotiated response to text...it allows me to work in similar sorts of ways for certain aspects of the course as in English language'. Therefore he thought that discussion was a normal and essential element of his literature lessons The main differences in teaching style were due to the active, investigative and collaborative approaches which he felt the language syllabus fostered through the use of small scale research projects into aspects of language in everyday use.

Analysis of lessons

Both of Teacher E's lessons were ninety minutes in length. The language lesson consisted of four year 12 students and was concerned with children's early language acquisition which was part of an on-going topic (Appendix 6). The literature lesson was made up of seven year 12 students and centred around the study of a chapter from *Some Tame Gazelle* by Barbara Pym.

The overall structure of the two lessons was very similar, reflecting earlier lesson observations: Teacher E worked with whole groups for the majority of the time except for brief periods of paired discussion work (17 minutes in language and 12 minutes in literature). Therefore most of the work was closely directed by the teacher, both in the presentation of topics and the prescription of tasks, and was centred around a shared text on which the students made notes (again teacher directed).

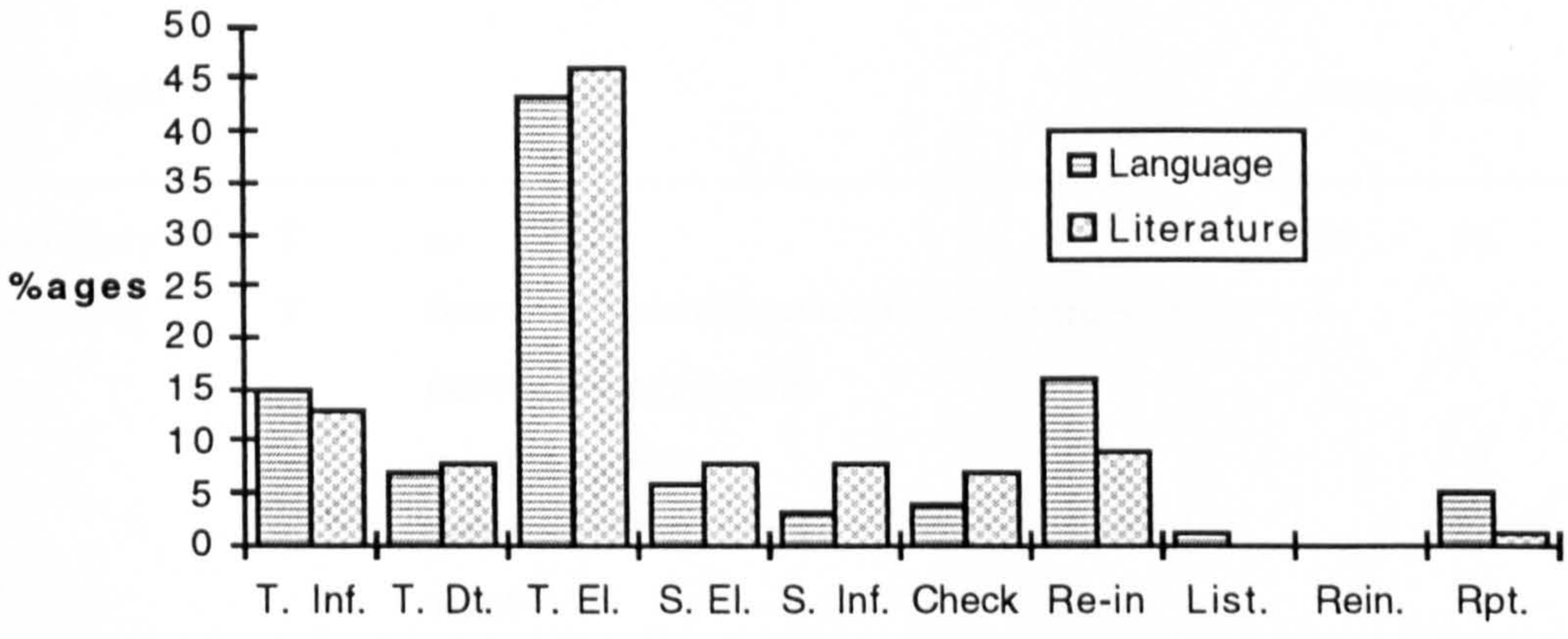
The quantification and distribution of the teaching exchanges and percentage scores for both lessons is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution and percentages of Teacher E's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	32/15	14/7	93/43	12/6	7/3	9/4	35/16	3/1		10/5
Eng. Lit.	19/13	12/8	68/46	12/8	12/8	10/7	13/9			2/1

A comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges for the two lessons is given in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The patterning of Teacher E's teaching exchanges



The similarity in the patterning of the interactions between Teacher E and his students in each of the lessons suggests that he does not vary his teaching style across the two A-level English subjects. The quantification and analysis of the teaching exchanges in both lessons suggests that he works rigidly within an I-R-F/E structure in which teacher directed question-answer exchanges and teacher exposition are the predominant features of the discourse. This is reflected in the fact that in the literature lesson 68 percent of the teaching exchanges are made up of *teacher elicits* (or re-initiation exchanges bound to the teacher elicit) and *teacher informs*, and in the language lesson the figure is 74 percent.

The patterning of the teaching exchanges reflects the fact that in both lessons the classroom discourse is tightly controlled by Teacher E. It is he who normally selects the topic, asks nearly all the questions, makes most of the requests and usually provides evaluative feedback. He also usually allocates turns to the students and decides which responses are to count as valid contributions so that they almost exclusively act as respondents through brief answers. Alternatively Teacher E is seen elaborating on points or conducting 'mini-lectures' through informing exchanges. This is illustrated in the following extract from the literature lesson where he is revising the concept of literary genres with the students:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	so	Fr	m
Teaching	T	first of all remind me what are the three main genres literary genres	I	s
		what is a genre		el
		genre is a French word which means what		cl/el
		what		
		nobody here does French		el
		I hate it when nobody does French because it's always a good source if somebody does French you can always say right what is a genre and they'll say ah and then always lead me into something		com
		genre		el
		it's a French word but also a very common English word		cl
		if you're musical people talk about musical genre as well people talk about rock folk classical		cl
		now what am I talking about there different what		el
3	S	groups	R	rep
4	T	groups well [4]	F	e

5	S	area	I	rep
6	T	area [4]	F	e
7	T	or something beginning with *t* you can do it upstairs in the computer room as well	I	cl
8	S	type	R	rep
9	T	type yeah ok	F	e
		so there are three main literary types or genre		com
10	T	I've mentioned that word before haven't I in fact I've gone through this whole speel before haven't I because this is just for revision	I	ch
11	S	yeah	R	rep
12	T	literary genres (spells it out) and we can divide literature broadly into three main types	I	s
		now what are they		el
13	S	prose poetry drama	R	rep
14	T	prose poetry drama	F	e
15	T	we have done this before	I	s
		it's the old there's no point in doing it once		z
		syndrome though isn't it you have to do it 25,000 times		
		prose poetry and drama		s
		and if take a guess if you don't know see if you		el
		can work out of those three genres historically		
		which is the newest of them the baby of them		
16	S	drama	R	rep
17	T	why do you say that	I	s
		is it just a guess because you had a one out of three chance		el
18	S	yeah (laughter)	R	rep
19	T	I mean drama is well established I mean if you think of Greek drama it goes back to before Christ by a number of centuries	F	com
20	S	prose	I	rep
21	T	prose that's correct yes	F	e
		prose is the newest of the genres and now I would suggest tht of all the literary genres		com
		prose is the most popular and the most thriving in English and particularly the novel the novel form		

(Teacher E - English literature, pp. 4 - 5)

This sequence of elicits is typical of Teacher E's questioning style which occurs throughout both lessons. It follows an I-R-F/E pattern where *starters* are often used as a matter of routine (e.g. Turn 2) to give advance warning that a question is imminent and some *clues* as to how to answer it. He also uses 'reformulations' throughout the sequence in an attempt to get the students to come up with the answer he desires by simplifying and restating some of the information needed for the acceptable answer.

The extract also demonstrates how the students usually have to work within the teacher's frame of reference with few opportunities for them to co-construct meanings or challenge the meanings that are imposed. This is reflected in the relatively low percentage of *student elicits* in both lessons (6 percent in language and 8 percent in literature) and the absence of any evidence of the students acknowledging, correcting or challenging a response through an evaluation move which is always the teacher's prerogative.

A similar patterning of discourse is also evident in the language lesson where the teacher does the majority of the initiating and the students' utterances are largely restricted to response moves as in the following extract. Here Teacher E is reviewing work on word and sentence structure which has been covered in previous lessons:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	yeah ok so that was phonology the production of sound	Fs	con
Teaching	T	well go on then	I	el
	S	grammar	R	rep
	T	ok grammar right	F	acc
	T	go on talk to me about grammar this should trip off your tongue you should be like robots saying grammar is a	I	el com

S	combination of sentences and words words in sentences	R	rep
T	ok	F	acc
T	grammar can be split into two different aspects which are	I	el
S	lexis	R	rep
T	no	F	e
S	morphology	I	rep
T	morphology and	I	el
S	syntax	R	rep
T	morphology and syntax thank you this is better than it has been in the past but it's still hardly tripping off your tongue (laughter)	F	e com
T	now morphology is what	I	el
S	internal structure of words	R	rep
T	thank you good it's beginning to trip a little bit more now	F	e com
T	right morphology is to do with the internal structure of words	I	m s
	so we get the word like play		el
S	playing	R	rep
T	playing playful playfulness yeah and the way that words are built up seemingly that's morphology	F	e com
T	syntax is what Sarah said it is I think she may have said it the other way round	I	el cl
S	combination of words into sentences	R	rep
T	the way that words are put together to build sentences sentence structure ok good you're beginning to get that now we've been about six months trying to get to this stage	F	e com

(Teacher E - English language, pp. 6 - 7)

This form of 'teacher interrogation' of the students' knowledge and understanding is typical of the teacher's questioning style and shows the severity of the functional constraints that are imposed on the students by the I-R-F/E

structure unless they break it by commenting on another student's reply, or challenge the teacher's evaluation or feedback which is very rare. The students' 'familiarity' with the material in the language lesson seems to have little effect on the teacher/student interaction. As in the literature lesson, the teacher's control over the discourse allows little opportunity for students to contribute ideas and to initiate questions and challenges to the teacher's frame of reference.

Another feature of Teacher E's questioning style is his use of *re-initiation* exchanges which are bound to *teacher elicits* and which account for 16 percent of the teaching exchanges in language and 9 percent in literature. This is demonstrated in the following extract from the language lesson where the teacher uses *re-initiation (ii)* (Turns 8, 10, 12) and *re-initiation (i)* (Turn 14) exchanges to move the students towards the 'correct' answer in response to his question about the stages of children's lexical development and which finally brings the sequence to an end:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	which brings us on to just about where we ended up last term	Fs	ms
2	T	which is the third stage called	I	el
3	S	semantics	R	rep
4	T	no that's the third element of language acquisition	F	e
5	T	we divided up phonology grammar semantics we said that the early in looking at grammatical development we said there are three stages in grammatical development one word holophrastic two word and then Rose has got a crib list (inaudible)	I	el n
6	S	do you call it stage three or something	R	rep
7	T	stage three no	F	e
8	S	telegraph	I	rep

9	T	telegraph good guess not quite there	F	e
10	S	telephone	I	rep
11	T	mm closer [3]	F	e
12	S	telephonic	I	rep
13	T	telephonic (laughs)	F	e
14	T	Sarah has actually found her file and is going to tell us the answer	I	n/p
15	S	telegraphic	R	rep
16	T	telegraphic the third stage called the telegraphic stage	F com	e
17	S	what's the middle one called then	I	el
18	T	two word one word holophrastic and the third stage telegraphic	R	rep

Teacher E - English language, pp. 11 - 12

One of the few challenges that is made to the teacher's frame of reference comes in the literature lesson in a sequence in which the teacher returns to an answer given earlier by a student to a question on how character description is revealed by the author:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	anything else	I	s
		I suppose what people do to them and that's not an exhaustive list but it will do		s
		and you were talking there about direct and indirect revelation of character		s
		which ones would you say were direct or indirect		el
2	S	indirect would be the description by third person	R	rep
3	T	so you would say that was indirect yeah	F	e
4	S	what's said about them is indirect	I	el
5	T	yeah	R	rep
6	S	I thought description by a third person was direct	I	el

7	S	I thought it was direct	I	el
8	T	well it depends on whether you believe the narrator doesn't it if you've got an objective narrator well you could say that was direct revelation if your narrator is somebody in the novel who is not a third person narrator well then you might be betraying you know your narrator might have an attitude towards the character being described	R	rep

(Teacher E - English literature, p. 10)

In his reply to the students' questions, Teacher E admits that the terms are not precise and therefore there may be various understandings or interpretations. However, rather than opening up this point for discussion, and thereby providing an opportunity for the students to advance and examine different opinions or frames of reference, the teacher, as the accepted 'expert', gives an 'authoritative' answer to the students' question (Turn 8) before moving on to another sequence of teacher elicits.

Usually, however, the students' elicits, are procedural questions such as 'Do we do that in pen' or requests for information. This is demonstrated as in the following example from the English language lesson where a student asks about the infinitive which leads the teacher into giving an elaborate explanation of the grammatical term (Turns 7 and 8):

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	did you say it changed the infinitive when you were talking about infinitives	I	el
2	T	yeah	R	rep
3	T	if you look at a word I mean have you studied has anybody studied French	I	s el
4	S	you say that all the time	R	rep

5	T	I say that all the time (inaudible)	F	z
6	S	I did but we didn't talk about complicated things like that did we	I	i
7	T	when you get a verb in an unaltered state let's say play (inaudible) or you can put it in the future he will be playing or you can put it in the past we played we have played or we have been playing or we use to play so there are all sorts of things you can do to that verb to make it express different meanings yeah but the version of the verb where we haven't done anything where it's just simply to play because you don't know who's playing there you don't know when it happened that's called the infinitive yeah and that's the standard way that we do it you know it's the infinitive if it's to play I want to play to play football is a good thing to play golf is boring what have you ok so when I say the infinitive that's what I mean	I	i
8	T	in French there isn't they don't have an infinitive that's the thing that they find the French find difficult to grasp first singular why do you have the toin front of a verb for them the infinitive is one word (writes on board) jouer jouer means to play	I	i
9	T	does that answer your question	I	ch
10	S	NV	R	rea

(Teacher E - English language, pp. 25 - 26)

At this level it is not uncommon for the teacher informing exchanges, as in the above example, to be quite elaborate in their detail, thereby reinforcing the teacher's control over the frame of reference as the accepted 'expert'.

Overall, therefore, the discourse analysis shows there is little variation in Teacher E's style as he teaches across the two English subjects at A-levels. It also reveals that there are severe functional constraints imposed on the students by his rigid use of the I-R-F/E structure. In contrast to his perceptions of how he teaches the

two subjects, the analysis of the classroom discourse reveals that he is heavily didactic through his use of recitation. This means there are few opportunities for the students to make any extended contributions of their own so as to develop the argument and discussion and challenge the frame of reference defined by the teacher. Contrary to Teacher E's beliefs about how he taught the two subjects, the pedagogic thrust was firmly under his control as he interpreted meanings, decided what work was appropriate and how and when it was to be done.

6.7 Teacher F Analysis

Teacher F had been teaching for sixteen years during which time he had gained extensive experience of teaching A-level English literature (AEB 660) with 50 percent coursework assessment. His experience of teaching A-level English language (NEAB) went back five years.

In his interview, Teacher F thought there were differences in the way he perceived and taught the two subjects. This was because A-level English language had shifted the focus away from 'high status' literary texts and was concerned with the nature and function of language in all its written and spoken forms. Because it drew on the study of linguistics he felt that it had a much broader content than English literature and that it demanded a more active and investigative approach in order to make the abstract concepts of the syllabus accessible to the students:

'I think I found out that there's, I'm very much more aware of the content and in that sense you feel you've got to equip them with all this content so they can go into the examination. So I think I found it different in that way you know you've got to give them solid chunks of information and back that up but also the approach to it needs to be investigative to get them to actually do it for themselves because without that it's deadly if you don't approach it that way because it can be so abstract. The kind of

> thing that I would never do with the literature students is send them out to do a survey, you know a questionnaire, that kind of thing, for example a dialect survey, ideally collecting data or making tapes of their parents telling a story, transcribing and analysing.'

Generally, like the other teachers in the study, he felt language was more outward looking because of its investigative and collaborative approach, whereas literature was more arcane and introspective because of its traditional critical approaches concerned with matters of literary technique and values which are capable of being studied without reference to anything else, such as the historical and social context in which a literary text is produced. Teacher F also thought that in his role as a teacher of literature he was perceived as being more of an expert who unlocks the meanings and dispenses authoritative interpretations of the literary texts:

> 'With a literary text you're really examining stylistics, you're examining you know kind of set parameters, stylistics and structure and character and really you're going through that with every text to build up their knowledge but with the literature there's a lot of teacher explication or a degree of that. There's a lot of students working independently on the text giving support through worksheets or whatever, group work. In literature the text is more self contained, today we're reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. So in that sense you feel language is more outward looking and vocational I suppose whereas literature tends to be more inward looking. In a way you don't really go outside the text.'

Teacher F also thought that generally speaking language attracted less able students as literature students 'tend to be as a group slightly more highly qualified from their GCSE kind of ALIS scores' and who were 'more likely to go on to read English at university.' However, in a personal and vocational sense, he thought the language students were better served:

> 'I think with the language course it does serve the students in terms of getting them to think about writing and to express themselves and

audience and purpose and I think that equips them to if you like exist in the world outside where people are pressurising them all the time.'

In addressing students' vocational needs, however, he felt language went beyond a narrow utilitarian view by giving students the critical tools to analyse and understand the manipulation of language in the media.

Analysis of lessons

Both of Teacher F's lessons were seventy minutes in length. The group was made up of sixteen students in their second term of study who were working on Act 1, Scene 4 from *Measure for Measure* . After a brief introduction lasting five minutes, the students were set to work in groups discussing questions on the scene (Appendix 7) during which time the teacher was filmed as he moved around the classroom to interact with the groups. This contrasted with the two earlier lesson observations where he worked with the whole group for the majority of the time.

The language lesson consisted of thirteen students also in their second term of the course and was focused around the topic of children's lexical growth during early childhood (Appendix 8). In contrast to the literature lesson, the first twenty minutes were spent with the teacher working with the whole class exploring how children develop their lexicon (During the two previous language lessons Teacher F worked with the whole group for the majority of the time). The students were then set to work in four smaller groups preparing descriptions of made-up words for presentation to another group; this activity lasted for twenty minutes with no intervention from the teacher. For the last twenty minutes of the lesson, the students were brought together to form two half groups in order to make their presentations. During this period of the lesson, Teacher F dividing his time equally between the two groups.

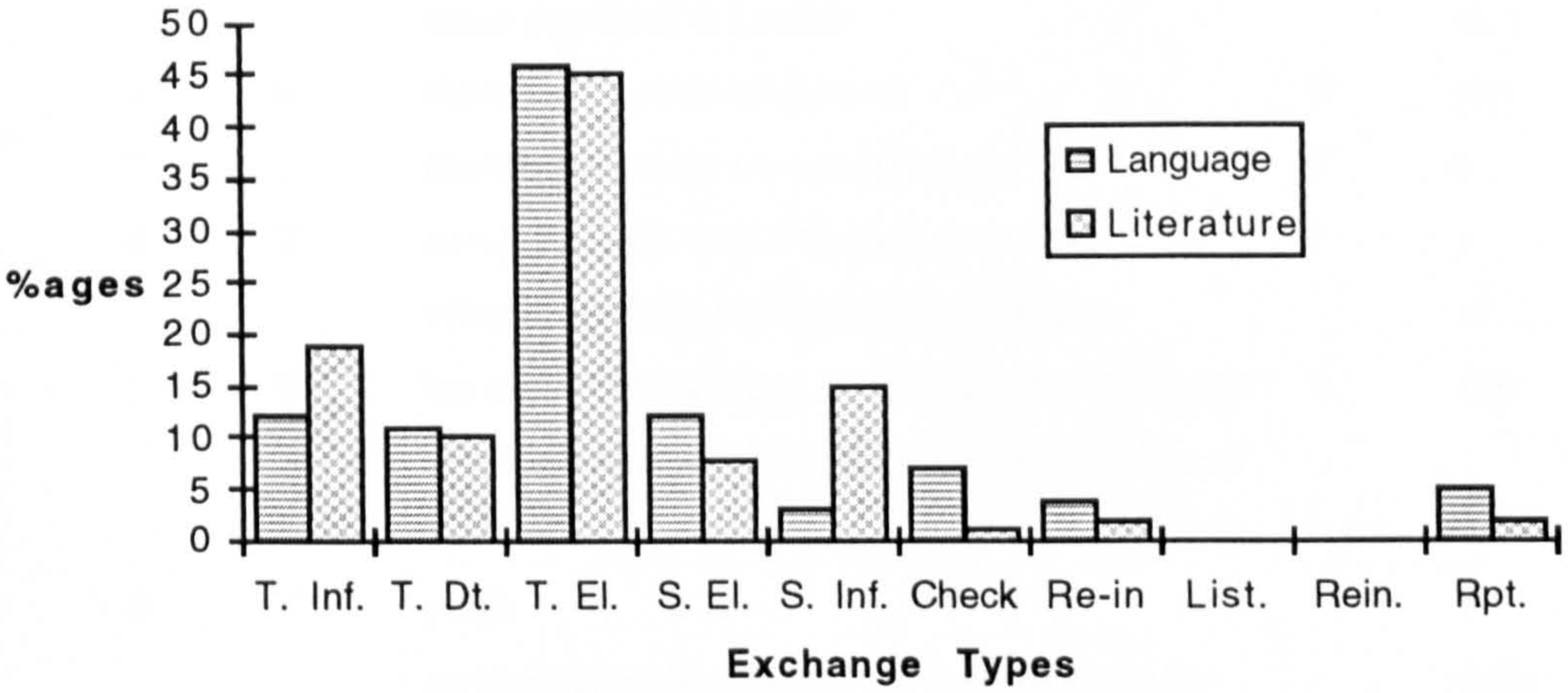
The distribution of the teaching exchanges and percentage scores for both lessons are show in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution and percentages of Teacher F's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	13/12	12/11	50/46	13/12	3/3	8/7	4/4			5/5
Eng. Lit.	25/19	13/10	60/45	10/8	20/15	1/1	2/2			2/2

Figure 8 shows a comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges.

Figure 8: The patterning of Teacher F's teaching exchanges



Although the structure of the two lessons appears to be different, the patterning of the teaching exchanges does not suggest any major differences Teacher F's management of the classroom discourse. His use of the I-R-F/E format dominates his interactions with the students with *teacher elicits* making up nearly half of the teaching exchanges in both lessons. Altogether the teacher initiates 85 and 77 percent of the teaching exchanges in the language and literature lessons respectively.

Overall, therefore, the analysis of the teaching exchanges suggests that Teacher F does not vary his teaching style when teaching across the two subjects or when working with smaller groups of students . For example in the following extract,

taken from the opening section of the language lesson, Teacher F works with the whole class using a recitation question-answer sequence:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	some of these accounts what about the one last week 'look he says to his mother, my peel's coming off' and we discussed the idea of peel and skin and how children differentiate between those things	I	s
		what about this number two a little girl watching a silent film is invisible talking		s
		what do you think how's she got that idea		el
		it's a clever way of talking about it invisible talk		com
		what's she getting at exactly		el
		what aspect of it Louise		el/n
2	S	there's no words no sound	R	rep
3	T	there's no words no sound at all	F	e
4	T	so do you call that if there's no sound where's she got the invisible bit from	I	s el
5	S	because if something is invisible then you can't see it so you can't hear then you know it's not visible	R	rep
6	T	yeah so she's transferring the concept of actually being absent as being something more accessible to you so if you can't see it it's invisible	F	e com
7	T	so she's not relating to the seeing is she you know she's relating it to the fact that it kind of vanishes it's not there and then transfers that over to the talk to the hearing things as well	I	i

(Teacher F - English language, p.5)

The extract is typical of Teacher F's use of the I-R-F/E structure in the opening stages of the lesson while working with the whole class in which he initiates an exchange through a fairly long questioning sequence, followed by a student's

attempt to answer the question and an evaluation of the often brief response. Typically within this structure, evaluation of the student's answer is the dominant function of the third move; the constraint that this imposes on the discourse usually results in the student's answer not being extended to draw out its significance or to make connections with other contributions.

A similar patterning in the discourse is also revealed later in the lesson when the Teacher F is working with half the class of students during their presentations as in the following example:

Exchanges				Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	*mecolic* sprouts	I	el	
2	S	horrible (laughter)		R	rep
3	T	sprouts		I	s
		what else could that have been chosen to be			el
4	S	vegetables		R	rep
5	T	yeah [1-]		F	acc
6	T	would you actually just say *mecolic* or would you actually use runner bean would you		I	el
7	S	you'd actually go (facial expression) and swallow		R	rep
8	T	yeah you actually use gesture		F	e
9	T	does everyone know what that was		I	s
		you know what that meant			el
		that's a kind of universal human gesture isn't it			com
		to indicate that something is horrible			
10	S	NV		R	rea
11	T	right		I	m
		so that's only one strategy you'd rely on there is this sense of a common bond of gestures to bring out a certain thing ok			i
12	S	erm *gabral* where a mass of people know who you are		I	el
13	S	famous		R	rep
14	T	famous have you got that		I	s

		would that make sense to a three year old a		el
		mass of people who know who you are		
		do you think he'd understand that		el
15	S	no	R	rep
16	T	no	F	e

(Teacher F - English language, pp. 11 - 12)

Although at this stage in the lesson the students are given the opportunity to ask questions of each other (which seems to account for the slightly higher percentage of *student elicits*), the teacher still controls the discourse and frame of reference by evaluating the students' questions and answers and asking further questions. Most of the students' questions are in a 'party game' format in which the other students have to guess the right answer. They therefore do not have the same function as the teacher's questions in confirming, extending and challenging the students' ideas.

However, in the following sequence from the language lesson, the students are briefly observed evaluating answers to their questions (Turns 9 and 10) which is rare within an I-R-F/E structure because it is usually the teacher's prerogative to evaluate such contributions (Turn 9):

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	when you like your sister plays with your toys	I	el
2	S	kind	R	rep
		share		rep
3	T	what's the word again	I	el
4	S	*saloc*	R	rep
5	T	*saloc* [1-]	F	acc
6	T	are you going to tell us	I	el
		I've forgotten what it is myself (laughter)		z
7	S	or where you go to play on the roundabouts	I	el
8	S	park	R	rep

9	S	no (laughter) [2]	F	e
10	S	fair	I	rep
11	S	yeah [1-]	F	acc
12	T	so what was the	I	el
		hang on a minute		z
13	S	I didn't know which it was	R	rep
		you didn't say whether it was fair where you go or a fair where you are nice		rep
14	T	right [1-]	F	acc
		so you might say a fair where you play on the swings or whatever on the roundabouts and that's different from a fair where everything is fair		com
15	T	would you have got that first one fair where it is fair to let someone play with toys	I	el
16	S	no	R	rep
17	T	no [1-]	F	acc
18	T	what's wrong with that	I	s
		why's it inadequate as a way of explaining		el
		can you think why that is		el
		can you tell me why		el
19	S	it's not specific enough it's very difficult to do	R	rep
20	T	can you think of a way of expanding fair	I	s
		might erm what if you had like say you had a chocolate bar and you split it up and you made one bigger than the other one and you say that's yours that's yours so you (inaudible)		el
		you could say that's not fair you know especially if the child did it themselves and didn't split it in the middle you could comment and then say if you like that's not fair		com

(Teacher F - English language, pp. 13 -14)

At no stage in the language lesson, however, does a student evaluate the teacher's answers; similarly, there are no examples of students using eliciting exchanges to challenge the teacher's frame of reference to which the lesson always returns. The extract also shows the teacher asking and answering his

own question which is another strategy by which he controls the direction of the discourse (Turn 20).

The analysis of the literature lesson reveals a similar patterning in the classroom discourse as Teacher F moves from group to group conducting 'mini-lessons' within an I-R-F/E framework. The following extract is typical of the teacher's style of interaction when working with a group. In it the group are being asked to consider how Isabella should first appear before an audience and why she wishes for a very strict regime as a nun:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	erm I went to see the RSC production last week did anyone see that at all	I el	s
2	S	see what	I	l
3	T	the RSC production	R	rep
4	T	did anyone go to see it	I	el
5	S	no no	R	rep
6	T	I went to see it erm and in there she's wearing grey she's wearing a grey frock dress really erm she's not really a full nun yet so she can't wear white	I	s
		good stuff yeah if you want to express things to me about her purity		i
7	T	so how does she speak her four lines	I	s
		can you see the point of that question		s
		she's saying she seems to be asking you know		com
		is this all you have to do to be a nun isn't it (reads)'And have you nuns no further privileges' no further privileges are indications of the constraints you know ways of living		
		so do you think she's asking if she wants it to be even tougher more strict		el
8	S	yeah I think she's asking them	R	rep
9	T	the nun says 'Are not these large enough'	I	i

10	S	the nun seems quite content with what she's got	I	i
11	T	yeah	F	e
		she thinks they're bad enough really		com
12	T	I mean if you look they're not allowed to talk to men are they at all you know	I	el
13	S	no	R	rep
14	T	erm and she says Isabella ah yes privileges (inaudible) is that all you can do I'd (reads) 'rather wishing a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood'	I	s
		so what kind of nun is Isabella likely to be		el
15	S	a good nun	R	rep
16	T	a very good nun yeah	F	e
		a very strict nun		com
17	T	is there a certain sort of age when girls want to be a nun	I	s
		is it a romantic kind of thing		el
		it really was in my wife's generation because of the *Sound of Music* to dress like a nun		com
18	S	I never thought like that	R	rep
19	T	you never thought like that at all	F	e
20	S	it was my friend who wanted to be a nun when we were about twelve or something	I	i
21	S	sometimes with a hang over I want to be like a nun (laughter)	I	i
22	T	yeah when you've just like you've got a hang over (laughter)	F	z
23	T	what's the danger in Isabella wanting to be like more strict and going straight into being a nun and you know totally zealous you know	I	s
		what would be the danger in that		el
24	S	(inaudible) too fast	R	rep
		yeah too fast she's not being like		rep
25	T	what would sort of be the kick the kick-back from that	I	s
		what would happen to her when she plunges totally into it		el
26	S	she might change her mind she might think	R	rep

		why I'm doing this		
		she might be over anxious and want to go back		rep
		yeah regret		
27	T	yeah	F	e
		in the convent she can't even speak to people		com
		the vow of silence but she's very very keen at		
		this stage		

(Teacher F - English literature, pp. 6 - 7)

Throughout this extract, the teacher controls the discourse by asking all the questions, the length of which often contrast with the paucity of the students' answers, and he typically evaluates the students' answers within his frame of reference. At one point, however, he makes a personal contribution (Turn 17) when asking about romantic notions of being a nun and refers to his wife's experience. This in turn encourages similar contributions from the students through informing exchanges (Turns 20 - 21). However, this alternative frame of reference is not developed and the teacher's pedagogic agenda is re-imposed through a question which determine where the discourse moves to next (Turn 23).

Although working with smaller group in the literature lesson seems to encourage more informing exchanges from the students (15 percent in total), it is rare for them to take the initiative and to ask questions which challenge Teacher F's interpretation or follow his questions with questions of their own so as to negotiate meanings and introduce alternative frames of reference. Usually such attempts are quickly closed down. However, in the following (and only) example from the literature lesson, the students are allowed to challenge the teacher's frame by asking questions about Isabella's opening lines in Act 1, scene 4 with regard to her attitudes to the religious life:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	what about this next question about the first four lines	I	s
		what do you think to that		el
		how does she speak her first four lines		el
2	S	I think she's quite patronising	R	rep
3	T	what do you mean	I	el
4	S	like I don't know it seems like she's talking down to them or like kind of mocking them in a way saying oh have you no further privileges like she's saying oh well are these not enough and the saying yeah but	R	rep
5	T	do you think she's dismayed in that first line to find out all the strictness that's got to be in life as a nun	I	el
6	S	she was expecting it to be good wasn't she	R	rep
7	T	in what sense	I	el
8	S	great good laugh no not a good laugh she thought it was going to be something else she didn't expect it to be that	R	rep
9	T	does she think it's too lacks you know too easy going or too strict	I	el
10	S	too strict	R	rep
		too strict she says I haven't got anymore of them (inaudible)		rep
11	T	what privileges	I	el
12	S	although it might not be strict but it might just seem stricter if you destroy them	R	rep
13	T	but she says (reads) 'I speak not as desiring more' privileges i.e. freedoms 'But rather wishing a more strict restraint/Upon the sisterhood	F	e
		she's like saying I want you to be tough on me I want you know		com
14	S	so why's she saying privileges	I	el
15	T	because privileges just means all you're allowed to do you got a number (inaudible)	R	rep
16	S	well exactly so why would she say that but	I	el

		then say I want it to be more strict		
17	T	because she likes contradictions	R	rep
18	T	that's exactly it the first line the first line the first line might imply like have you got no other freedom than this you know I want more freedoms I'm a bit dismayed and then when the nun says surely that's enough she then sort of retreats into saying oh you know hey if anything I want it really to be strict you know she wants to make a good impression on everybody	I	i
19	S	that's exactly it well maybe then it is her she doesn't she thinks it is not true no she thinks it's too strict but when she says oh it's not enough well then she's got to think oh well I've got to like you know get on her side and that's where (inaudible)	I	i
20	T	it shows that she's quite uncertain in a way in her own err	I	i
21	S	what she's constantly changing her mind	I	el
22	T	it could be that and she's changing change in that sense and it could be that she doesn't really know about what danger it's going to entail	R	rep
23	T	erm so she says she wants it to be stricter what would be the danger in a girl of Isabella's age to be suddenly taken in a strict in a sisterly when she's not allowed to leave her compound at the nunnery	I	s el
24	S	it would be very hard for her	R	rep
25	T	very hard for her [4]	F	e
26	S	when she's not use to it then obviously (inaudible) she may not be able to err what do you call it comply	I	rep
27	T	yeah and actually yeah endure what she's got to endure sometimes you think you can can't you you do a fast for Oxfam or something and you go into it with great determination and five hours later you're desperate for a chilli con carni	F	e com

28	T	so really Isabella's got a zealous view of herself you know I'm going to be very you know a great nun I love God and all that you know and yet she doesn't really know her nature these are the kinds of things I'm going to bring out in her she's a bit uncertain she's over enthusiastic perhaps	I	i
29	S	but she's easily mislead isn't she like one minute she's saying that and the next minute she's just tries to get (inaudible)	I	el
30	T	yeah yeah	R	rep
31	S	so is that people are going to take advantage of her using her like that is that what you're on about	I	el
32	T	well	R	rep
33	S	I mean she's got things it usually starts off with silly things	I	i
34	T	like what	I	el
35	S	well it gives you something about the person that person put like in that predicament something like that	R	rep
36	T	something like that at least it's offering you something of a choice isn't it	F	e com

(Teacher F - English literature, pp. 11- 14)

This extract has been quoted at length because it unusual in that it includes five *student elicits* which makes up half the total number of questions asked by the students in the whole of the literature lesson (Turns 14, 16, 21, 29, 31). Such questions from students which challenge the teacher's interpretation or frame of reference are rare within an I-R-F/E structure. To have so many occurring within one section of the lesson suggests disagreements and negotiation emerging and a less asymmetrical relationship between teacher and students. Although Teacher F starts off controlling the discourse with a sequence of specific questions, and having dismissed the idea that Isabella is patronising in

her opening four lines, he does appear more tentative in his suggestion that Isabella is contradictory in nature (Turn 22). It seems at this point he is exploring and articulating his own thinking on the matter and he therefore appears to relax his pedagogic agenda. This briefly provides the opportunity for contributions and questions from the student which are more extended and complex in their nature than is generally the case (Turns 19, 26, 29) and this result in an interplay of alternative frames of reference.

During the sequence of exchanges there are also less evaluations in the third move: instead the teacher is seen asking *follow-up* questions to get the students to elaborate more on their answers in the previous exchange (Turns 3, 7,11,25, 34). It seems at this stage he is using what Nystand and Gamoran (1991) term an *uptake* strategy where the teacher incorporates their answers into subsequent questions so that they are genuine questions in contrast to 'normal' recitation question. He therefore allows the students' contributions to modify the course of the discussion at this point which results in more of a probing and extended discussion about the ambiguity of Isabella's position.

Overall, though, the analysis of the discourse reveals that whenever the Teacher F interacted with his students, whether it was with a whole class or small-group of students, he would take over interactional and semantic control of the discourse. Contrary to his beliefs about his pedagogic practice as expressed in his interview, the analysis of the discourse shows that he is heavily didactic in his teaching of both English subjects. Although Teacher F's use of group work suggests a change in teaching style, by encouraging more of a decentralised form of teacher/student talk and more opportunities for the students to participate in the discourse, a deeper analysis of the discourse, of what Bern stein (1982) calls the 'underlying semantic', suggests there is little variation in his teaching style as he works across the two English subjects. In other words, the analysis reveals

that there is a strong tendency to preserve more traditional patterns of classroom talk under the appearance of organisational change so that the pedagogic agenda remains firmly with the teacher.

6.8 Teacher G Analysis

Teacher G had been teaching for twenty four years during which time he had mainly taught traditional A-level English literature syllabuses assessed by terminal examination. However, for the past four years he had gained experience of teaching a literature (NAB English literature syllabus C) and a language syllabus (NAB) with 50 percent courseware.

When interviewed about his teaching of the two subjects, he thought there were distinctive differences in the way the two subjects were conceived and taught. He saw the subject ideology underpinning the English language syllabus as being 'a much more liberal and generous interpretation of what language and literature is always about' whereas English literature was much more narrow in its definition of a text and concerned with a narrow range of critical approaches and values:

> 'In literature the strategies you'll bring to bear as a reader tend to be ones that are conventional literary strategies whereas the language ones are newer and wider and probably less prescriptive. That's another thing about the difference between the two, literature has been, it has been, you know, conventionally a prescriptive study. The whole notion of a canon of English literature tells you that doesn't it whereas research into English language which is largely descriptive is what the English language A-level is all about and that's quite a fundamental difference.'

However, he felt that the courseware element in the literature syllabus was helping to break down the notion of a traditional literary canon because it

allowed for a more liberal interpretation of what could be studied as literary text by including literature written in English from around the world:

> 'You're not going to find a more liberal syllabus C at A-level, it has set books from the post-colonial genre and so on, it's very liberal in that respect. There's a wider reading element, a composition element, which are definitely looser than the Cambridge syllabus is.'

In discussing differences in teaching styles between the two subjects, like the other teachers in the study, he said:

> 'I perceive we teach the subjects very differently. The English language approach is very much research orientated and there's a lot of exploration going on and it's descriptive, because of that it tends to be practical. It tends to be more sleeves rolled up, whereas erm literary study I wouldn't say everything we do is lecture orientated but it's not always very practical, you wouldn't call it practically based. It tends to be debate and it tends to be rather traditional, I would have thought in the way A-level has always been taught.'

Although Teacher G thought he used more of a didactic style in his A-level literature teaching because 'the focus is tighter because it is a shared text', he still tried to encourage the active participation of his students through seminar discussions and student presentations. In accounting for the main differences in teaching approaches between the two subjects, he returned to the point, made by most of the teachers in the study, that a great deal of the work in English language was of an investigative nature which promoted more individually negotiated work, particularly as the course progressed:

> 'I try to do things which will allow them to have confidence in their own interpretations, that's what I want them to do, really think along literary/analytical lines and not really regurgitate what I think or feel. But some of the students are not strong enough to do that, they need me to be an expert, you know it depends. But I wouldn't really want them to feel

that I was the expert and them picking crumbs from my table, that's not really the relationship I want in either course. Literature does tend to be group-based whereas English language does, it becomes as their experience grows and their independence grows, it becomes more and more individual and the research project is something very much supported by themselves and lessons end up being, have tended to be dialogues between me and one student whilst the others are supporting their own studies somewhere else. But that tends to come after quite a bit of group work laying in some foundations and methods of analysis and that kind of thing.'

Therefore, despite perceived differences in subject ideology and pedagogy, discussion was still seen by Teacher G as a normal and essential element in both subjects.

Lesson Analysis

Both of Teacher G's A-level English lessons were ninety minutes and took place in the third term of the students' courses. The language lesson group was made up of six students who were studying conversation analysis, whereas the literature lesson was made up of eight students who were studying Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale.*

Throughout most of the language lesson, the teacher worked with the whole group of students except for two occasions when he asked the students to work in pairs (the first activity lasting for eleven minutes and the second for sixteen minutes) reflecting the structure of the two earlier language lessons. The work was mainly centred around a worksheet on structuring a mini-language project on conversational analysis (Appendix 9) and was, for the most part, teacher directed with the students taking notes on points raised during the course of the lesson. Similarly in the literature lesson, the teacher worked with the whole class

for the majority of the time although, in contrast to the two previous lessons observed, he asked two students to 'lead' the discussion centred around the characters of Autolycus and Hermione from *A Winter's Tale*.

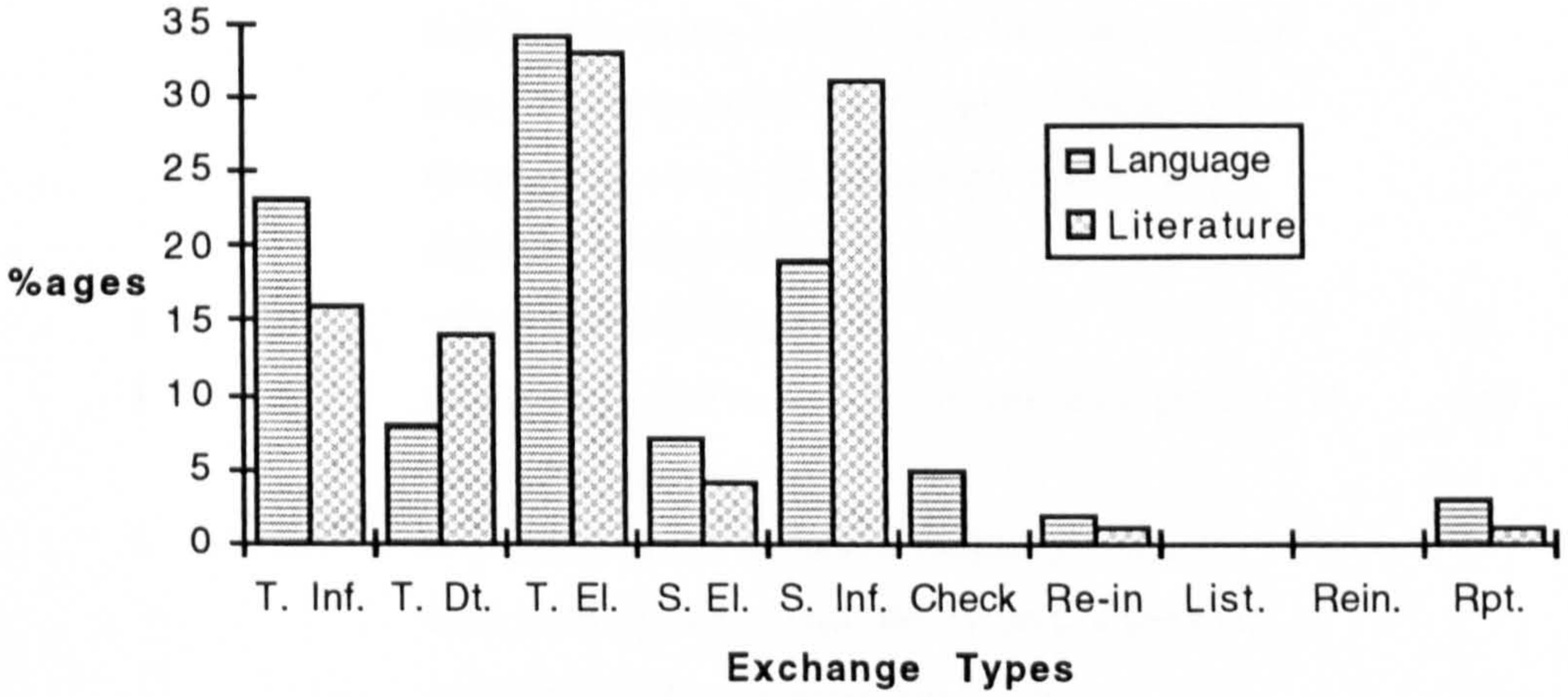
A break-down of the analysis and distribution of the teaching exchanges for each of the lessons, together with their percentage scores, is given in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution and percentages of Teacher G's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	39/23	13/8	58/34	12/7	33/19	8/5	4/2			6/3
Eng. Lit.	35/16	30/14	70/33	8/4	66/31		2/1			2/1

A comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges is also illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9: The patterning of Teacher G's teaching exchanges



The overall analysis of the patterning of the teaching exchanges shows that while there are some differences in the distribution of the teaching exchanges, Teacher G still works within an I-R-F/E format. Teacher initiations make up 74 percent and 65 percent of the teaching exchanges in the language and literature lesson respectively, suggesting that teacher-led question-answer exchanges and teacher

exposition are still a prominent feature in both lessons. However, the analysis shows a higher level of *student informing* exchanges in both lessons, particularly in the literature lesson, than would normally be expected within an I-R-F/E framework (31 percent in the literature lesson and 19 percent in the language lesson).

The higher percentage of *student informing* exchanges in the literature lesson seems to result from the student presentations. This is illustrated in the following extract taken from the opening stages of the lesson where a student is starting his presentation on the character of Autolycus:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	right and then he spots the clown on page eighty three line thirty five and then he goes about robbing	I	m i
2	S	erm after his robbing on line one hundred and fourteen he states he's going to the sheep festival this is really important to the plot direction of the play because if he doesn't go to the sheep shearing festival then	I	i
3	S	which line which page	I	el
4	S	page ninety five no I've lost it where's it gone err page eighty seven	R	rep
5	S	if he didn't go to the sheep shearing festival then nothing that would be the end of the play wouldn't it because then you there	I	i
6	T	wouldn't the Shepherd and the Clown go to Sicilia and the father wouldn't be presented before Leontes and then the reconciliation between his daughter wouldn't happen urm that's very true isn't it as far as the direction of the plot is concerned Autolycus plays a very important part there	F	e com

7	T	carry on Tony excellent	I	d
8	S	yeah and we move on to act scene four act four err lines five hundred and ninety six to six hundred here he talks about how honesty is a fool and trust is his sworn brother and it's quite important like to his character to show like how devious he is	I	i
9	S	and then on page one hundred and twenty five there's he's seen by Camillo and the Florizel swops clothes with Florizel on line six hundred and forty seven and that's quite important to the play as well	I	i
10	T	say why	I	el
11	S	because then he wouldn't be able to con the Clown and the Shepherd again by saying I'm going to take you to see Leontes	R	rep
12	T	yes it's become a disguise of that of a lord yes	F	e
13	S	erm on line six hundred and seventy on the next page he understands and erm realises what's going on between Camillo Florizel and Perdita and he then begins to on the next page to con the Shepherd and the Clown and this takes a while	I	i
14	S	he talks about the father on page line seven hundred and seventeen which is on	I	i
15	T	what's this parcel again you keep referring to	I	el
16	S	a parcel of what Antigonus left for next to the baby of Perdita	R	rep
17	T	which is important why	I	el
18	S	because it tells them who did it	R	rep
19	T	yes it does that's right	F	e

(Teacher G - English literature, pp. 4 - 6)

Although the student is expected to lead the 'seminar' through his presentation, the analysis suggests it does not result in a discussion in which the other students ask questions and make extended, thoughtful comments of their own so as to develop the argument. In this extract, the only question asked by a student is a

procedural question (Turn 3) enquiring about the page reference that is being referred to. In contrast to this, the teacher asks questions (Turns 10, 15, 17) to confirm, extend and challenge the information being provided, the answers to which are typically evaluated, and commented on (Turns 6, 12, 19).

In this way, Teacher G exerts his control over the discourse so although it seems the student is given more of an opportunity to initiate and contribute ideas beyond the usual brief utterance in response to the teacher's questions, It is the teacher who asserts his 'right' as the 'expert' to control the frame of reference so that the students are still dependent on his authoritative interpretations. In other words, although Teacher G appears to be using to be a using a more decentralised form of teacher/student interaction to promote a greater student engagement and participation in the classroom talk, a closer look at the discourse suggests there is little change in the I-R-F/E format. The teacher's continued use of questions for initiating, extending and controlling the discourse and his use of the *feedback* move to evaluate the student's contribution means that the student's contribution is not being extended so as to draw out its significance and make wider connections so as to encourage a greater equality of student participation. Therefore it does not produce a mix of statements and questions, nor evaluations of the ideas being presented, by a mix of teacher and students. This is reflected in the low percentage of student eliciting exchanges (4 percent) in the English literature lesson which, as in the above extract, are usually requests for information.

Similarly in the language lesson, the teacher allows for more *student informing* exchanges during the two feedback sessions from the paired work. This is illustrated in the following extract where a pair of students have been asked to report on how they would set about analysing features of conversation for a mini-language project:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	come on then	Fr	m
Teaching	T	let's come together and see what people's methods might be	I	d
2	T	ok Tony Ben	I	ch
3	S	sir I'll go first	I	i
4	T	you want to go first	I	ch
5	S	aye Ben's still writing I might as well	R	rep
6	T	go on then Kim I can't see you from here hold on go on then	I	d
7	S	first I'm going to erm pick out first the turn-taking like we did in the conversation	I	i
8	T	urm hum	F	acc
9	S	just to finish that off and then I'm going to talk about each conversation separately	I	i
10	T	hold on you're going to pick up the turn-taking	I	s el
11	S	and the pitch like we did in the first conversation	R	rep
12	T	turn-taking and right through all the conversation	F	e
13	S	through all the conversations	I	rep
14	T	I see [1-]	F	acc
15	S	just to finish off	I	i
16	T	right [1-]	F	acc
17	S	and erm I was going to talk about each conversation separately	I	i
18	T	right [1-]	F	acc
19	T	why would you do that	I	el
20	S	I don't know just probably it's a good idea	R	rep
21	S	to make it clear		rep
22	T	I think you're probably right to	F	e
23	T	why would it clearly separate them	I	el
24	S	because if you talk about them altogether you make it confusing that much more it makes the conversation and things like that when you take it in turn then you can pick out the points that you want of each conversation	R	rep

25	T	right [4]	F	e
26	T	would is it possible we're keeping an open mind on this one	I	s
		but is it possible that the three conversation will contain some of the same features		el
		will they all have turn-taking in for a start		el
27	S	urm	R	rep
28	T	right of course they will	F	e
		you wouldn't have much of a conversation if they didn't take turns would they		com
29	S	I think if you're going to take the conversation separately it may get boring if you talk about the same things like turn-taking	I	i
30	T	so you're going to talk about turn-taking three separate time	I	el
31	S	that's what I was just thinking there it may get boring	R	rep
32	T	repetitive	I	el
33	S	urm hum	R	rep
34	T	yeah it could do	F	e

(Teacher G - English language, pp. 18 - 19)

Although the Teacher G's stated intention was to get the students to think about and explore their own ideas for approaching the project, and although he allows them space to report back on their ideas, he quickly takes over control of the discourse and as the 'expert' brings their suggestions round to his frame of reference so that the students provide the 'appropriate' answer (Turns 26 - 34). Again, through his questioning and evaluation of the students' contributions, there are few opportunities for the other students to make statements, ask questions and to agree or disagree with the ideas being presented. Typically within the I-R-F/E framework, only the teacher, who is perceived as being the authority on such matters, has the right to question and to acknowledge, correct and challenge through the evaluation move.

The teacher's informing exchanges are also a prominent feature in both lessons, accounting for 23 percent of the teaching exchanges in the language lesson and 16 percent in literature. Often, in contrast to the *student informs*, the teacher's informing exchanges are elaborate explanations of points as in the following example, taken from the literature lesson, where Teacher G is explaining his criteria for a mini-project:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	right	Fr	m
Teaching	T	you seem to have a clear idea of where of where you're going try to remember that your work is largely descriptive that is don't worry about discovering some earth moving conclusion that no one's ever seen before don't worry about that what you need to exhibit are these things in a good project you need to be methodical hence the reason for talking about the method you need to be methodical you need to be open minded and you need to record honestly what you find don't set out looking for things you think might be there just look and record what you do find open mindedness and method and thoroughness so leave no stone unturned eventually	I	s i
3	T	that's where the length of the project comes from as a marker I know they can be tedious to read especially ones you haven't picked for yourself much better if you picked a topic of your own because you're interested in it to start with you may have no interest whatsoever in the Wilkins and their conversation although judging from what you're saying you do sound quite reasonably animated about it	I	s i

(Teacher G - English language, pp. 23 - 24)

The findings show that although Teacher G appears to be moving away from a teacher-centred approach through his use of a seminar format in which the students are expected to lead and play an active part in the 'discussion', such changes are superficial. A closer analysis of the 'underlying semantic' suggests there is little variation in Teacher G's teaching style as he works across the two English subjects at A-level so that traditional patterns of classroom talk are preserved. Contrary to his beliefs about his pedagogic practice, the analysis of the discourse shows that under the appearance of organizational change there is little variation in his didactic methods. Despite his use of student-presentations and report-backs, which seem to account for the higher number of *student informing* exchanges in both lessons, there is little scope for student initiatives leading a lessening of interactional or semantic control by the teacher. There is, therefore, a lack of fit between his stated objectives and classroom practice.

6.9 Teacher H Analysis

Teacher H was in her second year of teaching during which time she had gained experience of teaching A-level English Language (NEAB) with 50 percent coursework and a combined English language and literature syllabus (AEB 623) assessed by terminal examination.

In her interview about her teaching of the two subjects, Teacher H felt there were distinct differences in how the two subjects are conceived and in the way they are taught because of the notion of what constitutes a text in each subject: most of the texts in the literature syllabus are selected from a literary canon whereas in language any spoken or written text is worthy of study so that it draws more on the everyday knowledge of the students:

'Well the literature is very much based on looking at a set text, so it is very much focused on a certain text or a certain genre of literature whereas language it's looking at writing in all different aspects and the spoken word as well and I would try to get them not just to say this is a metaphor but to get them to analyse why things are being used and how things are being used. So I suppose the aim is really that they're able to understand how language in all its different elements works together and why certain writers, certain speakers use certain things. Text in language covers everything we look at: advertising, you know we look at the spoken word, spoken discourse, so it could just be an everyday conversation like this that they can transcribe and they can analyse that as conversation and they talk about pauses and fillers and things as well as talking about the accent and how things are phrased.'

Because of these differences, she thought this influenced her teaching style and the way she approached texts. In literature she felt she had to introduce the students to conventions of literary criticism and matters of literary technique:

'In literature you don't focus so much on the linguistic side, for literature you'd be looking at the meaning within the whole text and how it fitted into the character. I teach them the basics about how to analyse a piece of literature: I speak to them about rhythm, metre, metaphor, imagery, metonymy; it's almost like a stylistics course I suppose in a way but how to analyse the language of literature.'

This in turn this affected her role as a teacher because she had to be more of an authority in interpreting the literary texts so as to prepare the students for the critical literary essay through which they would be assessed. This meant that she was much more didactic in her teaching as she took the students through a literary text:

'When approaching a text for A-level literature they have to learn how to annotate their texts because so much of it is open texts exams and how to make notes so it would be very much whole class, perhaps some small

> group work at the beginning to get them into the routine of it and then. So once you've read the whole text then it becomes similar to the language work in terms of working in small group work, pairs or whatever, doing different activities.'

In contrast to this, in her language lessons she thought she used a different approach because of the investigative nature of much of the work in which students were expected to take a greater responsibility for their own learning and draw more on their own life experiences through the use of research projects. Here she felt she was in much more of a consultative role through which she could guide their learning:

> 'In language the investigative approach comes into their project work and that comes into their creative writing project. It's like GCSE writing, it's an extension of that where they're writing whatever they want so long as they've got a clear purpose and audience. And then the project which is basically scientific, you know if they were doing a study of southern dialect for example then they would have to be very scientific in the way they approached it analysing the signs, transcribing things. In language I'm using a lot more activities which make them think rather than me giving them notes and saying learn this.'

Teacher H therefore thought there were distinctive differences in the way A-level English language and English literature are conceived and in the way she taught the two subjects.

Lesson Analysis

Teacher H's lessons were fifty-five minutes in length. The language lesson filmed was made up of ten students who were in their first term of the course and studying accent and dialect. She worked with the whole group for half of the lesson time; the other half was spent with the students working in pairs translating statements using the International Phonetic Alphabet and working

out the Tyneside pronunciation of a list of twenty-five words using phonetic script (Appendix 10). This contrasted with the two language lessons observed prior to the filming where Teacher H worked more with the whole group for the majority of the time.

The literature lesson consisted of twelve students who were in their fourth term of the course; they were carrying out a stylistic analysis of a passage from Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale* as preparation for a 'critical unseen paper' (Appendix 11). Again, the teacher worked with the whole class for half the lesson, with the other half spent working in pairs followed by a ten minute report-back. This contrasted with the more informal observations of the class where Teacher H spent more time with the whole group.

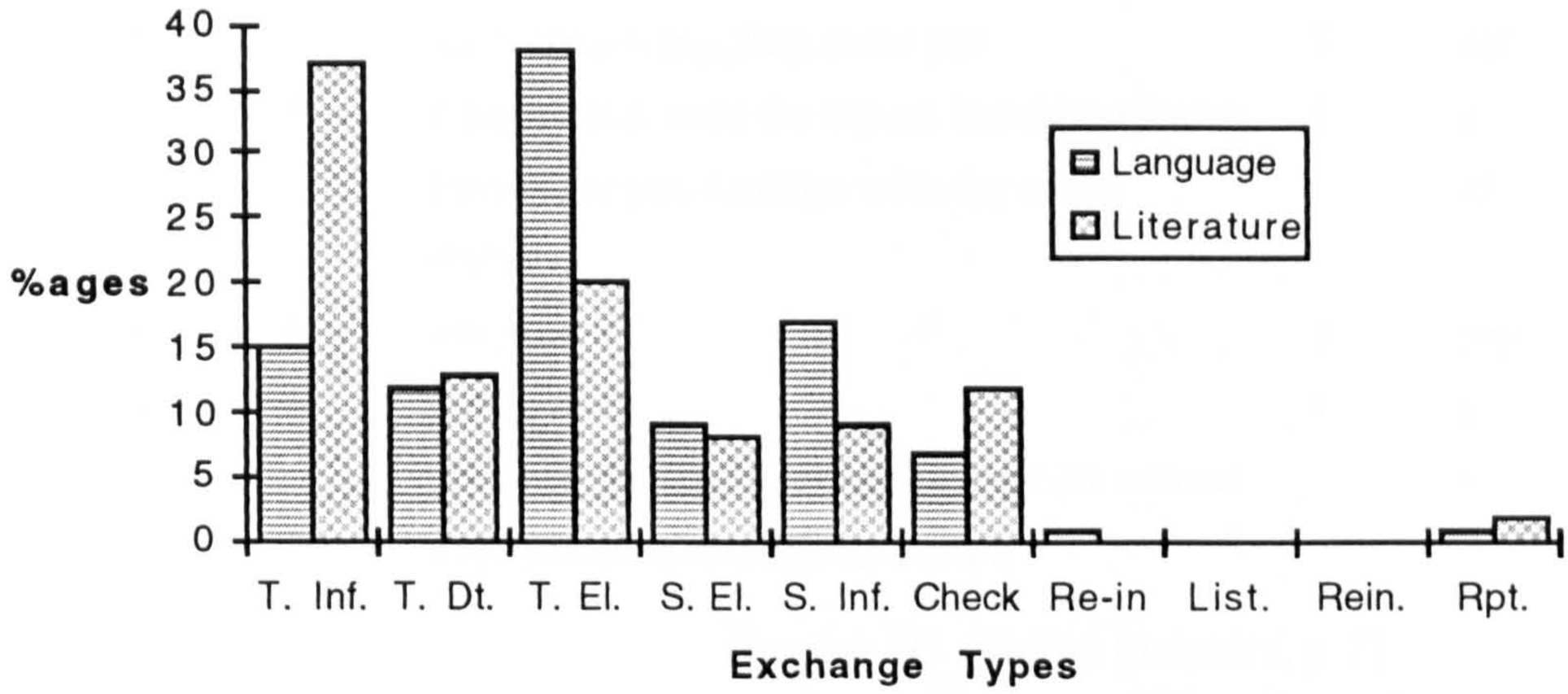
Table 9 shows the distribution and percentage scores of the teaching exchanges for both of Teacher H's lessons.

Table 9: Distribution and percentages of Teacher H's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	18/15	14/12	45/38	10/9	20/17	8/7	1/1			1/1
Eng. Lit.	37/37	13/13	20/20	8/8	9/9	12/12				2/2

Figure 10 illustrates the patterning of the teaching exchanges for both lesson.

Figure 10: The patterning of Teacher H's teaching exchanges



Although the two lessons are similar in structure, the discourse analysis shows some variation in the distribution of the teacher's informing and eliciting exchanges and in the students informing exchanges. However, most of the exchanges are teacher initiated with *teacher informs* and *teacher elicits* accounting for 53 percent of the teaching exchanges in language and 57 percent in literature. The teacher therefore works within an I-R-F/E framework and provides, through 'lecturing' and through closed factual questions, the structure into which student talk is fitted and within which it is assessed according to the closeness of fit. By such means she maintains an interactional and semantic control throughout both lessons.

The analysis of the literature lesson reveals that during the twenty-five minutes spent working in pairs the students were mainly left to 'get on with their own work' resulting in few interactions with the teacher. Only three such interactions occurred and they were brief in nature as in the following example:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	how you getting on	I	ch

2	S	alright	R	rep
3	S	what's erm what's *lecherye lecherye*	I	el
4	T	lechery well if you call someone a lech	R	rep
5	S	(inaudible)	I	i
6	T	um hum yes giggling there yes	F	acc
7	T	it just means over the top ok indulging just as I mean are you familiar with the word gluttony	I	s el
8	S	um hum	R	rep
9	T	pure greed obvious it's closely related to food it's related to physical or sexual excesses ok	I	s i

(Teacher H - English literature, p. 7)

Even in her brief encounters with the students, the teacher still works within a recitation pattern, responding to the student's request for information by taking over the frame of reference and asking questions. In fact all of the student eliciting exchanges in the literature lesson, which make up 8 percent of the total, are either requests for information, as in the above example, or procedural questions. At no point in the lesson is a question asked which challenges the teacher's interpretation of the text.

In language lesson, however, during the paired work on looking at differences between RP and the Tyneside accent, the teacher interacts more with the students and for longer periods of time as in the following example:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	miss we're stuck	I	i
2	T	you're stuck	F	acc
3	T	what about adding *my* that symbol there fifteen is it the same sound as *my* without the *m* yeah	I	s el
4	S	(inaudible)	R	rep
5	T	yes [1-]	F	acc

6	T	which symbol do we use in RP	I	el
7	S	the same one	R	rep
8	T	the same one [2]	F	e
9	S	is it perhaps a (inaudible)	I	rep
10	T	good yes	F	e
		it's almost like we've put an extra sound in		com
		there good		
11	S	*sing* (inaudible)	I	el
12	T	you haven't got as many options with some of	R	rep
		these words		
13	S	*sing* that ing oh you've got *ie* as well	I	i
14	S	so does that actually mean *ing* or just *urm*	I	el
15	T	just the *urm* the last little bit yes	R	rep
16	S	we'll have to put that in	I	i
17	T	because if you look at another example here	I	s
		there actually is an *i* sound		
		what you need to do is decide which sound it		s
		is going to be		
		is it close to *c* or to *sit*		el
		it's a very similar sound		com
		is it the *e* or the *i* of sit		el
18	S	we haven't got that we got another one but we	R	rep
		had *d* in one		
19	T	yes	F	e
		I mean there should be differences		com
20	S	*sing singing*	I	i
21	T	*ing* yes	F	e
		you just say *ing*		com
22	T	do you say do you pronounce the *g*	I	el
23	S	*sing singing* no I don't think we do don't we I	R	rep
		think we just say an *n*		
25	T	just a *n*	F	e
25	T	I think perhaps you have to listen so carefully	I	s
		do you see how how it's very very		el
26	S	(inaudible)	R	rep
27	T	good	F	e
27	T	a good way to think of a distinction between	I	i
		these two is to think of your mouth when you		
		say *sin* I think I was telling you this and *there* or		

them your tongue is in a slightly different place
and that might help you to distinguish

(Teacher H - English language, pp. 9 - 10)

Teacher H's interaction with the students appears to create more opportunities for them to initiate informing exchanges and to ask questions as it is during the paired work that most of the student informing and eliciting exchanges occur. However, because the teacher works within an I-R-F/E frame, there is no opening up of the topic to draw on the students' own knowledge of the Tyneside accent; rather the teacher controls the interactions through her questioning and evaluation of the students' contributions so that there is no real interchange of ideas beyond the teacher's frame of reference.

Teacher H's use of informing exchanges is more noticeable in the literature lesson, many of which occur in the opening stages of the work:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	in line one the first word I'll tell you *whilom* it's the third word that means once upon a time	I	s i
2	S	(inaudible) it's obvious	I	i
3	T	yes of course it's so obvious (laughs)	F	com
4	T	once upon a time it's line one line two the penultimate word *haunteden* which means practice ok	I	i
5	T	line three *riot* means it can have the same meaning as today debauchery rioting	I	i
6	T	*hasard* is gambling	I	i
7	T	the next one brothels and *tavernes* same meaning inns pubs	I	i
8	T	ok you all keeping up this won't take long just a few words to fit in	I ch	m

9	T	line six the last word *might* means capacity ok	I	i
10	T	line nine this wonderful phrase *superfluitee abhominable* that means unnatural sensual excesses unnatural sensual excesses	I	i
11	T	I'll explain a little bit about the text in a minute don't worry if it sounds a bit strange for the time being ok	I	i
12	T	line eleven *grisly* means terrifying oh I suppose you could even leave it as grisly it's quite a nice sounding word	I	i com
13	T	line twelve the word *totere* it means tear apart	I	i
14	T	line thirteen *rente* means tore as in when I've torn something	I	i
15	T	line fifteen *tombesteres* means dancing girls	I	i
16	T	line sixteen the first word means neat or graceful *Fetys* I suppose you could say that	I	i
17	T	the last word in that line line sixteen is fruit seller *frutesteres* the middle English word is that means fruit	I	i
18	T	line seventeen *wafereres* confectioners sweet makers	I	i
19	T	line twenty the third word *annexed* means annexed	I	i
20	T	and *glotonye* means gluttony	I	i
21	T	almost there just two more line twenty one it says *hooly writ* that just refers to the bible as a whole	I	s i
22	T	and finally the last line *luxurie* means lechery	I	i

(Teacher H Literature, pp. 2 - 4)

Teacher H's line by line paraphrasing of the Chaucer text at this stage in the lesson significantly adds to her informing exchanges which make up 36 percent of the total teaching exchanges, although teacher explanation is a regular feature of both lessons. Her greater use of *teacher informs* in the literature lesson may reflect the fact that she is introducing a new topic whereas in language the work is part of an ongoing topic on accent and dialect. The students' 'familiarity' with

the topic may have also contributed to their higher level of informing exchanges, which make-up 17 percent of the total teaching exchanges, as they probably had more background knowledge to draw on. When informing exchanges are used in this way, the teacher is often seen by the students in the role of the 'expert', as an authoritative transmitter of information on which the students were often expected to be take notes.

Although the analysis shows some differences in the amount of teacher questioning between the two lessons, arising mainly from greater teacher/student interaction as the teacher moved around the class in the language lesson, when working with whole groups there appears to be little variation in the teacher's discourse style. This can be seen in the following two extracts from when the students are reporting back on their discussions. The first one is taken from the language lesson looking at phonetic differences between RP and the Tyneside accent:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	ok	Fr	m
Teaching	T	I suggest that if somebody gives a good example of something which they've spotted about the Newcastle accent then do note it down because something you'll need for essay writing later on in the course will be good examples so jot things down which people suggest	I	d
3	T	so you can do the work and tell me what differences there are between the Geordie accent and RP please	I	el
		somebody volunteer		p
		you've told me them		cl
4	S	*dance*	R	rep
5	T	*dance* good	F	acc
		you say dance up here it would be *darnce* right		com

		good well done		e
6	T	another example	I	s
		something different		el
7	S	I don't know probably up here you'd get *aboot*	R	rep
		instead of *about*		
8	T	good *aboot* instead of *about* excellent well done	F	e
		again the vowel sound changing		com
9	T	anything else	I	el
10	S	after *poor* and *fire* instead of like the *r* sound	R	rep
		you'd say *a* like *poora* instead of *poor* well you		
		know		
11	T	*poor* I know what you're getting at yes	F	e
		again it's this idea of the *r* sound in *barth*		com

(Teacher H - English language, pp. 12 - 13)

Here the patterning of the discourse follows a predictable recitation sequence of question-answer in which most of the teacher's moves are initiations which function as requests for responses, and most of the students' moves are responses with the function of suggesting possible answers to questions. These are usually followed by a teacher evaluation which either acknowledges the response as acceptable, unacceptable, or correct it.

Teacher H's control over the discourse, through her use of the I-R-F/E format, can also be seen in the following extract from the literature lesson where the students are reporting back on their discussion of the stylistic features of Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale* :

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	ok	Fr	m
Teaching	T	I'll think we'll come together	I	d
3	T	now I'll just explain the context of this	I	s
		Graham actually managed to point out that		i
		this is supposed to advice people against doing		

		the things in this passage it's supposed to be a sermon a pardoner is a type of preacher ok and that's important this is part of a sermon an example of a sermon and the people he's describing you find out later in the tale		
		(student coughs) goodness me you're all ill aren't you it's like a hospital in here you find out later in the tale these people come to a very bad end ok and implied the implicit meaning is if you behave in this way in the same way as the people in the story you will end up in a very sorry way as well i.e. you'll go to hell ok that's important because it affects the style so that's something you might want to think about		z i
Boundary	T	right	Fr	m
Teaching	T	I don't mind what we start with I'd like somebody to tell me something about this particular text please	I	s el
		I don't mind what it is		el
6	S	he uses *e en* and *es* as common suffixes	R	rep
7	T	ok endings good	F	e
8	T	you covered several things there Catherine *en e* and *on* are used on the end of words	I	s
		what class of words has those endings		el
		what type of word verb noun adjective		el
9	S	I don't know verb adjective	R	rep
10	T	all three (laughter) well verb was actually the answer I was looking for thank you Sue	F	e com

(Teacher H - English literature, pp. 10 - 11)

Again, after a fairly long exposition, Teacher H initiates all the questions and evaluates, and if necessary corrects (Turn 10), the students' suggestions. It is also interesting to note how the consideration of language features in the Chaucer extract plays a prominent part in the literature lesson. In her interview, Teacher

H thought that her language teaching was also influencing her stylistic analysis of literary texts where she made the students more aware of the language features.

However her perceptions of how she teaches the two subjects are not born out by the analysis of the discourse: overall, the findings suggest that both lessons are didactically taught and dominated by a combination of teacher-presentation and teacher directed question-and-answer with little variation in teaching style. Although Teacher G, as in the case of Teachers F and G, appears to be moving away from a teacher-centred approach through her use of paired and group work in which the students are expected to play an active part in the 'discussion', the analysis suggests such changes are superficial. When interacting with the students, there is little variation in her teaching style regardless of whether she is working with the whole class, pairs or groups of students. Therefore her reliance on the I-R-F/E discourse structure across both subjects conflicts with her perception of how she teaches the two subjects, particularly her teaching of English language which she assumed to be more investigative and open-ended rather than teacher directed.

6.10 Teacher I Analysis

Teacher I had been teaching for six years during which time she had gained experience of teaching A-level English literature (AEB 660) with 50 percent coursework assessment and for the past two years had been teaching A-level English language (NEAB) also with 50 percent coursework.

When asked about her perceptions of teaching the two subjects, she felt there were differences in subject ideology and in the way they were taught. In terms of subject ideology, like the other teachers before her, she felt English language was

more relaxed and inclusive about its notion of a text and what was worthy of study in the classroom. She also thought it was more 'vocational' in its orientation because of its stated aim of combining learning about the nature and function of language with learning how to use English more effectively. This meant that less able students were attracted to and better served by the subject:

> 'They're probably better served by language actually because they do quite a wide variety of things: there's the kind of creative side to it and also the project which gets them to do their own research and their own focusing and things. Whereas the literature it's, I mean it is interesting and they end up discussing all kinds of issues which is useful but I think there is a wider variety of things on the language course which makes it probably more useful.'

In developing her point about differences in teaching styles she went on to say:

> 'I think probably with the language group they do more on their own, you know in groups and its probably with the literature group it's more focused towards me. Not that I'm there with the right answers to everything, but that I'm directing them more because, particularly on the language course, they've got their projects to do and they've got a lot of their own things to go off and find and do and a lot of it is like that saying go and find examples of so and so and then bring it back and discuss er I'm doing things in little groups. But with the literature it's more of me standing and saying right what do you think of this and always coming back to the text and to me.'

Teacher I therefore thought that she taught literature in more of a teacher-directed way, although discussion still played a prominent part in her lessons, because of the centrality of the shared literary text which contributed to the students seeing her an authority. In contrast to this, she felt that language was more student-directed because of the research projects whereby they had to take more responsibility for their own learning with the teacher in more of a consultative role:

'I like the fact that you can go in and you've got an immediate starting point for the lesson, whereas with the language you've going in and introducing them to new things all the time whereas you've got something solid, either a novel or a play or whatever with the literature.'

Analysis of lessons

Teacher I's lessons were seventy minutes in length. The language class was made up of ten students who were in their third term of the course and was focused around the development of sounds in children's early speech (see Appendix 12). For the majority of time in the language lesson, the teacher worked with the whole class on the same topic, thereby prescribing the nature and timing of the tasks with some opportunities for short group-based activities. This also fitted the pattern of the two previous language lessons observed prior to filming.

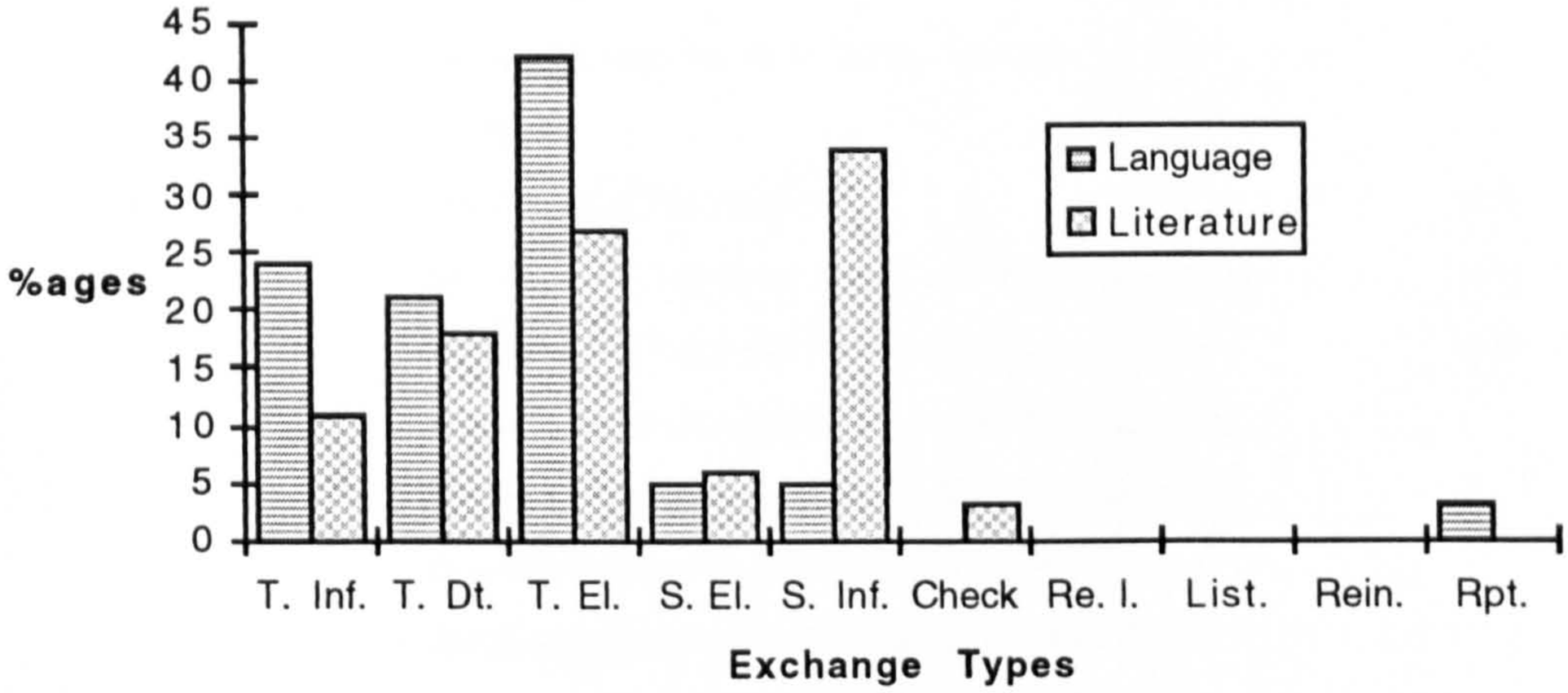
In contrast to this, the fifteen literature students were divided up into four groups and for the majority of the lesson time worked on preparing the prosecution and defence cases for a dramatisation of the trial of Frankenstein from Mary Shelley's novel in the next lesson. This activity was intended to act as a revision exercise on the novel in preparation for a mock examination which they would be sitting the following week. This lesson therefore contrasted with the two observed prior to filming, where the teacher worked with the whole group for the majority of the time. The teacher was therefore filmed as she moved around the classroom to interact with the four groups.

The quantification and distribution of the teaching exchanges in Teacher I's lessons is given in Table 10 together with the percentage scores. A comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges is also given in Figure 11.

Table 10: Distribution and percentages of Teacher I's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	23/24	20/21	41/42	5/5	5/5					3/3
Eng. Lit.	16/11	26/18	39/27	9/6	50/34	5/3				

Figure 11: The patterning of Teacher I's teaching exchanges



The overall analysis shows some variation in the distribution of the teaching exchanges between the two lessons, particularly in the students' informing exchanges in the literature lesson, although both are conducted within an I-R-F/E framework. The distribution of teaching exchanges in the language lesson suggests that Teacher I uses a large amount of teacher-directed question-and-answer and teacher-presentation with *teacher elicits* and *teacher informs* making up 66 percent of the teaching exchanges. In the case of the literature lesson, however, student informing exchanges account for 34 percent of the teaching exchanges which is higher than the *teacher elicits* (27 percent of the total) suggesting a much higher level of participation by the students than is normally the case in pedagogic recitation. This is reflected in the following extract from the literature lesson where the teacher is working with a group of students who are preparing the prosecution case against the character of Frankenstein:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	right	I	m
Teaching	T	what are you doing here	I	s
		I've just been talking to another group about the		s
		defence and they've got a pretty strong case		
		so what would you say		el
3	S	just that he made the monster so really he's	R	rep
		responsible for him		
4	T	yeah [1-]	F	acc
5	T	but what was his motivation in making the	I	el
		monster		
6	S	the death of his mother	R	rep
		to achieve something great but it went wrong		rep
		and he didn't consider the consequences of		rep
		what he was doing and so he didn't just and		
		it wasn't just the creation of the like monster		
		murder expert he let Justine take the blame		
		for the murder from him and erm he like		
		murdered the monster's bride as well so he		
		tried to cover his mistakes by the rest of his life		
		just carrying on making mistakes		
7	T	yeah [1-]	F	acc
8	S	he let innocent people take the blame for what	I	i
		he did		
9	T	yeah that's right [1+]	F	e
10	T	and why didn't he	I	s
		and he could have stopped it happening by		com
		telling everyone couldn't he by saying look this		
		is really really bizarre story		
		but it's true but he never did that so he could		el
		have prevented the murder couldn't he		
		(inaudible)		
11	S	NV	R	rea
12	T	erm right	I	m
		so I think you've got a strong case because he is		s
		irresponsible		
		and how do you sort of appeal say like a court		el
		case how would you appeal to the jury without		

		putting the monster (inaudible)		
		how do you		el
13	S	well he made him really ugly so that everyone was repulsed by him and when the monster went to him for help he just totally and utterly rejected him	R	rep
14	T	yeah [1-]	F	acc
15	S	like there was no way that the monster would ever have fitted in because he was completely isolated	I	i
16	T	that's a good point	F	e
17	S	and the monster appealed to him and he rejected him again when he appealed to him	I	i
18	S	and then killed his wife in front of the monster's eyes	I	i
19	T	yeah right [1+]	F	e
20	T	so you look at the physical aspects look at the fact that he virtually brought a child into the world but didn't him didn't give it any help I mean that if you look at it like that it shows a great cruelty (inaudible) basically he became the father of a child that he created and then said right you're repulsive off you go which is it totally isolated him so that would appeal to the pity of the	I	i
21	S	he never told like anyone what he'd done about when he never let anyone help him get rid of the monster and erm like when he died in the end the the monster chose to like kill himself but had the monster not done that then the monster would have been left just on the earth	I	i
22	S	before even he was created the monster was like erm isolated already because (inaudible)	I	i
23	T	yeah [1-]	F	acc
		well it's not made explicit in the novel but you get the idea he has used his research on the monster		com
		so he does yeah he does go against the		e

		professor's wishes he goes against all humanity		
24	T	but how would you	I	s
		I mean they were saying he had the best of		s
		intentions he had the best of intentions		
		obviously he set out to do it because he wanted		
		to prevent people from dying		
		so what would you say to that he never meant		el
		to do any harm		
25	S	he hasn't prevented anyone from dying	R	rep
		because the monster's gone out and murdered		
		people and		
26	T	urm hum	F	acc
27	S	he's abandoned the monster why did he	I	el
		abandon it then if he wanted to prevent it		
28	T	yeah	R	rep
29	S	up until sort of he abandoned it it was alright	I	i
		he'd just		
30	S	he should have left it to nature in the first place	I	i
31	T	yeah [1+]	F	e
32	S	it's not his place to	I	i
33	S	and he should have never attempted to do	I	i
		something like that on his own		
34	T	yeah [1-}	F	acc
35	T	that's something that he almost plays God and	I	i
		he says I can create life and I'll use it he		
		shouldn't have done that so that's quite a		
		strong argument that he then takes on the role		
		of God who decides who lives and who dies		
		erm actually creating life		
36	S	another one is his intentions were (inaudible)	I	i
37	T	yeah [1+]	I	e
		so you really need to stress that point you		com
		know have him taking on the role of God		
38	T	erm I think you've got I mean obviously you've	I	s
		got a strong case you've got one of the easiest		
		ones to do because it's obvious that all of the		
		things he did were cruel he didn't consider the		
		consequences of his actions		
		so anything else that you've mentioned		el

39	S	erm his ambition was too much for him to cope with it really concerned (inaudible) he really like by trying to create sort of a new life he wasted his own life because in the end he had to spend his whole life just chasing the monster about and I don't know like he wasted his own life	R	rep rep
40	T	that's right [1+] that could be used for the defence though I suppose saying that he suffered (inaudible)	F	e com

(Teacher I - English literature, pp. 9 - 12)

This extract, which represents most of the teacher's encounter with the group at this stage in the lesson, has been quoted at length to show the unusually high level of participation of the students in the discourse through *student informs* as they put forward their views on Frankenstein's character and his motives. Although the teacher maintains control over the discourse and pedagogic agenda through her questioning and feedback on the students' contributions, she gives them more space to articulate and develop their ideas (e.g. Turns 6, 21, 39). There is also more linkage between the utterances of the students (e.g. Turns 13 - 20), suggesting attention is being paid by the participants to what others say, and in the teacher's questions which seem to relate to the students' contributions and involve a genuine attempt to solicit knowledge and ideas (Turns 5, 10, 24).

It seems at this point in the lesson that Teacher I is making use of what Nystrand and Gamoran (1991) call *high level* evaluation through a process of *uptake* whereby she incorporates students' responses into subsequent questions and signals her interest in what they think. She also makes greater use of *accept* acts in response to the students' contributions of information rather than just evaluations of their worth through *evaluate* acts which usually follows a student's reply, initiation or reaction in the I-R-F/E structure. As a result of this, the sequence of the turn-taking in the extract is not as predictable or asymmetrical as

in the usual three part exchange which seems to encourage the greater student participation. Here the teacher asks fewer questions, listens more and the overall pace of the exchanges is slower. There is also a challenge by a student in the form of a *student elicit* (Turn 27) to the teacher's suggestion about Frankenstein's original intentions in creating the monster.

In accounting for the higher levels of student participation, Wells (1993) suggests that the status of the information under consideration will also affect the participation rate. This may have been the case in the literature lesson where the students, having studied *Frankenstein* during the course of the term, have a common starting point, and therefore a greater expertise and background knowledge to bring to the work.

However, even with the higher levels of student participation in the literature lesson, the opportunities for students to challenge the teacher's interpretation, to ask questions of each other and to seek information and explanation through questions of their own are rare. Student eliciting exchanges account for just 6 percent of the overall teaching exchanges, compared to 27 percent for the teacher, suggesting that the teacher/student discourse remains firmly within an I-R-F/E structure and the teacher's epistemological framework. Despite the greater involvement of the students in the literature lesson, Teacher I's use of recitation means that the students rarely acknowledge, correct or challenge her responses or explanations through an evaluation move which is her prerogative, so that she retains semantic and interactive control of the discourse.

The patterning of the teaching exchanges in the language lesson suggests an even greater control over the discourse and frame of reference by the teacher: here student informing and eliciting exchanges make up just 10 percent of the total teaching exchanges. This finding conflicts with Teacher I's perception, expressed

in the interview, that she is generally less didactic in her English language teaching. Throughout the language lesson she makes frequent use of informing exchanges which at times turn into 'mini-lectures' as in the following example on differences in children who are learning to talk:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	so	I	m
		the opposite to that is called a rule child		i
		and rule children are described underneath		
		(reads fifth statement) so a rule child that's		
		more kind of aggressive in its attitude to		
		language because it's trying to learn lots of		
		different pronunciations it's not just using the		
		ones that come easiest to it I mean this happens		
		all the time that you listen to children and		
		it sounds as though it's a load of old		
		gobbledygook but if you listen carefully it's		
		like that video we watched if you listen		
		carefully and you work out what they're saying		
		they do follow rules they're not just saying a		
		load of rubbish it's rules that they've picked up		
		it's like the example of the child that learned		
		the word noo noo for dog and referred that to		
		all different kinds of things and when the		
		adults about it they could see how the child's		
		mind had worked that it had linked certain		
		words like slipper or something else furry with		
		dog so it has used the word that it understood		

(Teacher I - English language p. 15)

Teacher exposition and teacher-led question-answer sessions are therefore a dominant feature in her language lesson as in the following extract where the students had been asked to consider the nature of the sounds *t* and *p*:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Boundary	T	right	Fr	m
		we'll go through these	Fs	ms
Teaching	T	what's *t* and *p* fronted or velar	I	el
3	S	fronted	R	rep
4	T	are they both fronted	I	el
5	S	yeah	R	rep
6	T	yeah [1-]	F	acc
7	T	what about stop or fricative	I	el
8	S	stop	R	rep
9	T	yeah they're both stops	F	e
		t and *p* because there's a stop on the end there		com
		it's not a kind of dramatic stop but there's some		
		obstruction to the air flow in you mouth		
10	T	and are they voiced or voiceless Clare	I	el/n
11	S	voiceless (laughter)	R	rep
12	T	voiceless because I	F	e
		the danger is that people go *te te* and you're		com
		adding that *e* that vowel sound but don't do		
		that just do the *t t* sound		

(Teacher I - English language p. 23)

This extract illustrates the rapid pace of the questioning and the brief responses expected from the students which are usually evaluated and commented on as part of the familiar I-R-F/E structure.

Overall, the findings of the discourse analysis suggest that the Teacher I works within an I-R-F/E structure in both lessons regardless of whether she is working with the whole class or small-group of students. When she joined a group of students in the literature lesson, she took over control of the discourse and of the frame of reference by asking questions and evaluating the students' contributions as in her whole class teaching of the English language lesson. Despite the greater opportunities created for the students to participate in the literature lesson

through student informing exchanges, there is still a great deal of dependence on the authority of the teacher and little evidence of challenges to the teacher's pervasive control over the pedagogic agenda.

The findings therefore contrasts with Teacher I's perceptions of how she teaches the two subjects as discussed in her interview. The patterning of the teaching exchanges show that Teacher I was more didactic in her style in the language lesson than she was in literature where she created more opportunity for the students to participate in the discourse through the student informing exchanges. However, even here there was not a radical departure from the I-R-F/E structure: the discourse did not take on a 'conversation-like' quality with more student initiated challenges and an interplay of alternative frames of reference, so that traditional patterns of classroom talk are preserved. Throughout the lesson it seems that the students are aware of the teacher's evaluating role as they go over material that has been presented during the course of the term. Nor was there much evidence of the *feedback* move being used, as Wells (1993) and Nystrand and Gamoran (1991) suggest, to extend rather than evaluate the students' answers so as to draw out their significance and ensure the discourse and meanings are jointly constructed by students and teachers. The teacher still controlled the turn-taking, asked most of the questions and evaluated the students' contributions against her own frame of reference to which the students willingly conceded.

6.11 Teacher J Analysis

Teacher J had been teaching for four years during which time he had gained experience of teaching an English literature syllabus with a 50 percent coursework option (NEAB Syllabus C), and at the time of filming was in the third

term of teaching an A-level English Language syllabus (NEAB) with 50 percent coursework on which the school had recently embarked.

In his interview about his A-level English teaching, like the previous nine teachers, Teacher J thought that there were distinctive differences in terms of subject paradigms and pedagogy. He felt that the differences in aims arose mainly from the fact that in A-level language there had been a shift away from the domination of literary studies so that literature had lost its special status: it was 'just one little component of language variety'. However, he also felt that the notion of a canon of English literature was being challenged in the literature syllabus because of the inclusion of a wider range of modern literature written in English from around the world, and because it was possible to introduce new critical approaches to texts which went beyond liberal humanist interpretations.

In terms of pedagogy, he thought A-level English language was taught differently because it draws on the field of sociolinguistics and is 'much more knowledge based and I think that you do have to know about the history of language, you do have to know about certain events in language history to make sense of the whole thing, I think its more content led', whereas in literature 'basically you've got four or five set texts and then look through eight texts whereas in language to start with you look at a greater variety of texts...there's a lot to get through.' He thought his approach to language was also influenced by the fact that he felt the students were better prepared by the school to cope with the demands of the literature syllabus because they had been taught a metalanguage for discussing literature which was not the case in language.

Despite the greater content in language, however, he did not feel that he taught it in a more didactic way because of the need to research the nature of language which he felt was at the core of the whole course. This meant allowing the

students time to develop their skills and knowledge by regularly working on language data which led to more collaborative and negotiated work. In literature, the shared text often meant that he worked with the whole group, although, through discussion, he hoped to foster alternative readings so that the students could make informed, independent and personal responses to texts which also considered the social, cultural and political dimensions in which they were set.

Analysis of lessons

Teacher J's lessons were sixty minutes in length. His language class was made up of twelve students in their second term of the course, and his literature group consisted of eleven students in their fourth term of study. Both lessons had a similar structure which had also been used in the lessons observed prior to the filming, with the students initially working in pairs or groups before coming together as a whole class to feedback and develop ideas raised in the exploratory discussion. For the language lesson, this consisted of four groups of three students discussing a handout (Appendix 13) on standard and non-standard dialects for the first twenty five minutes of the lesson; for the literature class, the students worked in pairs for the first twenty minutes of the lesson on questions which focused on characters' use of language in six extracts from *Wuthering Heights* (Appendix 14). During the course of the paired/group work, the teacher moved around the room to work with the students; this was recorded and transcribed to form part of the analysis.

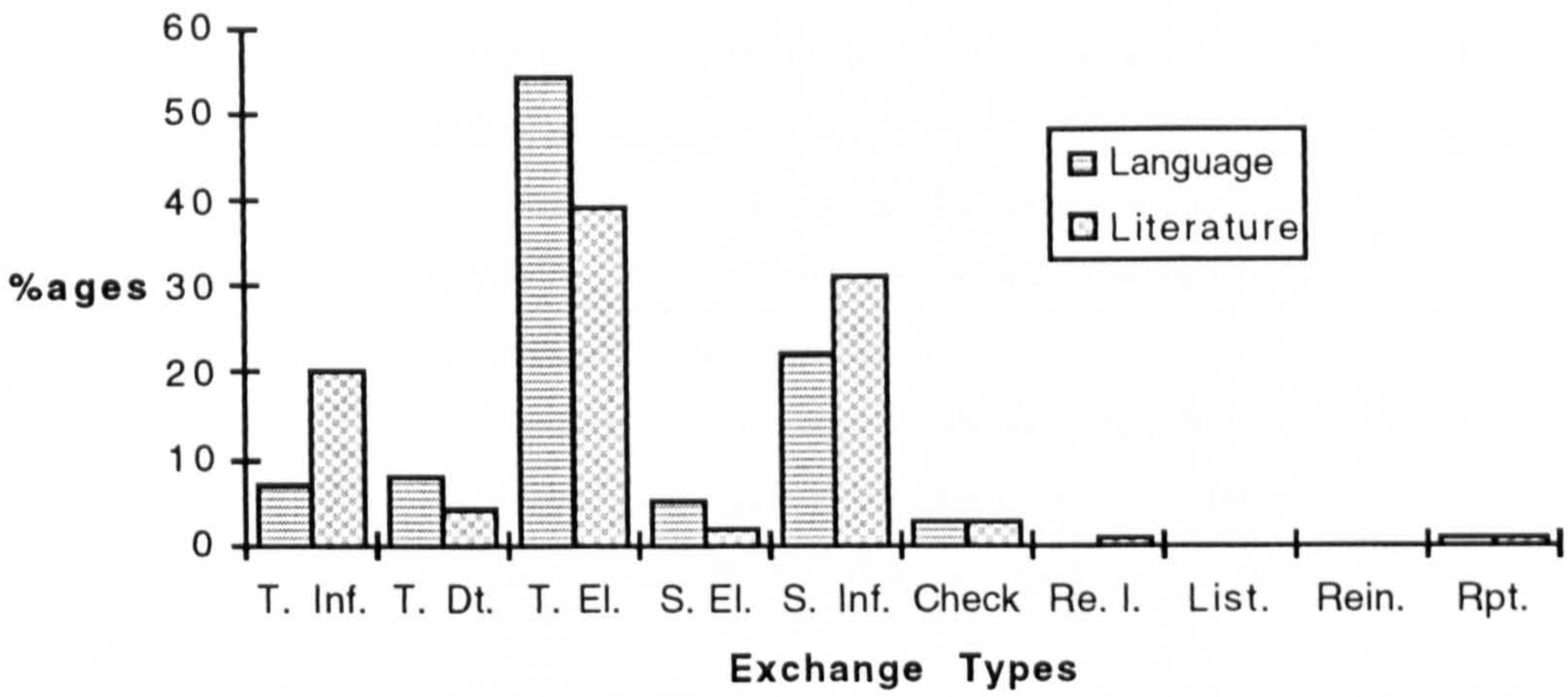
The overall analysis of the two lessons is given below in Table 11 which shows the quantification and overall percentages of the teaching exchanges.

Table 11: Distribution and percentages of Teacher J's teaching exchanges

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	16/7	19/8	124/ 54	12/5	50/22	6/3				2/1
Eng. Lit.	34/20	7/4	66/39	3/2	52/31	5/3	1/1			1/1

Figure 12 shows a comparison of the patterning of the teaching exchanges across the two lessons.

Figure 12: The patterning of Teacher J's teaching exchanges



The patterning of the exchanges, reflecting the structure of the two lessons, is similar with teacher initiations making up 73 percent of the teaching exchanges in the language lesson and 67 percent in literature. The findings therefore suggest that each lesson is conducted within an I-R-F/E format with *teacher elicits* making up the majority of exchange types in both lessons. However, *student informs* constitute the second highest percentage of exchange types in each lesson (31 percent in literature and 22 percent in language) which suggests the students, as in Teacher I's literature lesson, were given more opportunities to make contributions than is normally the case within an I-R-F/E format. This is illustrated in the following extract taken from the early stages of the language

lesson where the teacher is discussing with a group the view that standard English should be considered as a dialect:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	erm anything else that you can think of that would be perhaps against the idea that a standard English is not a dialect it's perhaps a more purer language	I	el
2	S	if it was a pure language it would be like a lot more people who'd speak it you know like sort of so with all the dialects and stuff like that not one of them's right and one of them's wrong	R	rep
3	T	right ok [1-]	F	acc
4	S	if one was right then it would be sort of enforced on you	I	i
5	S	yeah there would be more like people speaking it like you know the upper classes all of them would speak standard English	I	i
6	S	and I think err everyone would err you'd have to be able to speak if it was the proper language you'd have to speak that dialect that just to get anywhere	I	i
7	T	right [1+] so you're saying there that standard English has a kind of special status almost	F	e com
8	S	well it does but it would have more it would be more so if that was the proper language	I	i
9	T	oh I see what you mean yeah using this idea that it's somehow other than a dialect something more than a dialect	F	e com

(Teacher J - English language, p.6)

Here, unusually, the teacher allows time and space within the I-R-F/E exchange for the group of students to contribute their ideas through student informing exchanges, which build on previous contributions (Turns 4, 5, and 6). A similar

patterning of exchanges can also be seen in the literature lesson when the teacher was working with a pair of students. It is taken from the early stages of the lesson where the students have been asked to compare Lockwood's language to that of the other characters in the extract from *Wuthering Heights:*

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	so give us an example of the forcefulness of the characters	I	el
2	S	well on the very first one where he always says erm (reads)'What the devil is the matter' he's not it doesn't seem he's asking a question he's almost telling the person off for what he's doing or feeling the way he does	R	rep
3	T	yes it's a violent aggressive phrase isn't it	I	el
4	S	yeah (inaudible)	R	rep
5	S	that one where Hareton's saying 'Sit Down! ... He'll be in soon' it's like ordering him (inaudible)	I	i
6	S	and he's supposed to be a guest and like you know how you obviously he's doing what he's supposed to do he's offering him a chair and stuff he doesn't really do it in the kind of friendly manner that you expect I think	I	i
7	T	yeah [1+] there's no courtesy there's no formality no politeness is there so you know Hareton is just like giving a command sit down	F	e com
8	S	everything they say is like that	I	i
9	S	they're all commands	I	i
10	S	and at the end as well	I	i
11	T	right [1+]	F	e
13	S	the forcefulness	I	i
14	S	(reads)"My name is Hareton Earnshaw, and I'd counsel you to respect it'	I	i
15	S	they expect to get they expect to get	I	i

(Teacher J - English literature, pp. 2-3)

Again, the teacher builds on the students' contributions by incorporating the student's answer into his subsequent question (Turn 3) and in his feedback (Turn 7). In both extracts therefore, it seems that the students are given the opportunity to contribute their ideas because of what Nystand and Gamoran (1991) call 'high level evaluation', whereby, through a process of *uptake*, the teacher pays attention to the way in which student reponses are evaluated so as to ensure his questions are shaped by what immediately precedes it. It therefore promotes a less asymmetrical relationship between teacher and students at this stage in the lessons.

However, while there seems to be more extended contributions from the students in both extracts, the discourse does not take on a conversation-like quality with teacher and students taking more equitable turns in speaking because the teacher is still controlling the discourse: he still asserts his 'right' as the 'expert' to control the frame of reference through his questioning and evaluation of the students' answers and contributions.

The students therefore asked few questions in either the paired work or whole class discussion in the literature lesson, with *student elicits* making up just 2 percent of the total teaching exchanges. In the language lesson *student elicits* make up 6 percent of the total teaching exchanges, again suggesting little challenge to the teacher's control of the pedagogic agenda. This slightly higher percentage may also reflect the fact that they were more familiar with the material under consideration having previously been introduced to the material by a guest lecturer. Of the ten questions asked by the students in the language lesson, three were procedural matters. Most of the questions asked by the students are designed to clarify points or seek further information as in the following example from an early stage in the language lesson where a student elicitation (Turn 1) is used to clarify part of an extract:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	S	what does generally mutually intelligible mean	I	el
2	T	generally mutually intelligible	I	l
3	S	yeah	R	rep
4	S	it's this middle one I don't understand	I	i
5	T	mutually means reciprocal it's sort of like both of them so if somebody's mutually intelligible we can understand each other ok erm so that's what mutually intelligible means people understand each other	I	i
6	S	so it means they're generally both intelligent	I	el
7	T	yeah	R	rep

(Teacher J - English language, p. 6)

Here the student is prepared to risk displaying his ignorance, perhaps because he feels more comfortable in the small group. Of the nine questions, however, only one presents a real challenge to the teacher's frame of reference. While working with a group, a student challenges the teacher's explanation of what Prince Charles meant by his comment on the subject of religious language (Turn 5):

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	so when he's says it's supposed to be over your heads do you think he's actually saying you know it's better if people don't understand what religion is on about or is he saying it's better if we keep it mysterious	I	el
2	S	I don't think he knows what he's saying (laughter)	R	rep
3	T	you don't think he knows what he's saying ok	F	e
4	T	I mean I tend to think that he's saying you know it's a good thing if there is a bit of mystery in religious language because it makes people more likely to believe in it that's what I think he's saying in other words if people could understand exactly what religious language	I	i

		was saying you'd be less likely to believe it I mean it's		
5	S	yeah but isn't that saying that err it's not believable then if it's if you understood it it wouldn't be believable it's sort of like	I	el
6	T	he's not saying that directly I agree with you yeah	R	rep
7	T	erm but it's this idea that perhaps it somehow should be more complicated than ordinary people to understand it seems to be rather reactionary viewpoint a conservative viewpoint and we get the same idea I suppose in this third one (reads third extract)	I	S

(Teacher J - English language, p. 11 - 12)

However, the challenge is soon brought back to the teacher's frame of reference through an elaboration of his viewpoint (Turn 7) whose authority is finally accepted by the students.

Similarly in the literature lesson, all three questions asked by the students seek to clarify points raised. For example, having been allowed to respond at unusual length to Teacher J's elicit on the first extract from *Wuthering Heights*, where the students were asked to compare Lockwood's use of language (Turn 2), the student seeks through her own elicit (Turn 4) the teacher's opinion on the second paragraph:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	do you want to tell us what you think about that passage then	I	el
2	S	well erm the question was about which was err the more vivid response err response which creates a more vivid response in the reader and erm we thought it was the first	R	rep

		paragraph erm because it gives us like a true impression of the moors because the language is quite erm simplistic erm and you like you know like you might think it'd be boring like just using black and hard and that sort of thing because you know you generally get to use those sorts of words but it's like it shows them the barrenness of the landscape and erm like the coldness of the atmosphere of the old house and all that and also erm appeals to the senses much more because erm it's got cold and erm when he knocks on the door his knuckles are tingling and you can erm the dogs are howling and you can practically hear the dogs howling but the second paragraph is sort of too flowery and as Lockwood's retelling the sort of the story we rephrased what was said that's what we put because we thought that he would be cold and he wouldn't actually say that that he would say something else a lot less a lot long and err it can't draw the reader as much as because it's much more difficult for people to actually sit down and work out what's it's trying to say so it's too difficult to understand		
3	2	ok	F	e
4	T	so which would you say of the two paragraphs was the more typical of Lockwood's language	I	el
5	S	the second one probably	R	rep
6	T	right yeah yeah	F	e
7	S	but the first one it just shows like the power that that the moors has had on him that he's stopped talking in that sort of like he's stopped talking that rubbish and he's actually like looking around and seeing what the place is really like	I	i
8	T	right good excellent [1+]	F	e
9	S	and the second one I didn't understand because it says he ejaculated mentally so does	I	el

		that mean he wasn't actually speaking or		
10	T	that's right he wasn't actually speaking this	R	rep
		is his thoughts he's telling us about his		
		thoughts in the second paragraph isn't he		
		(reads)'Wretched inmates! I ejaculated,		
		mentally' erm which is rather an awkward		
		phrase in modern times (laughter)		

(Teacher J - English literature, pp. 18 - 20)

While there are no challenges to the teacher's frame of reference through *student elicits* in the literature lesson, two challenges do arise in the students' responses to the teacher's elicits. For example in discussing Emily Bronte's narrative techniques, Teacher J tries to move the students away from a Leavisite perspective of seeing the characters as real people who develop throughout the novel so as to get them to focus on the stylistic choices being made by the writer. After a long explanation of this point, he asks the students if they agree with this view; this is challenged, however, by one of the students in reply to the teacher's question (Turn 2):

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	does everyone get what I'm saying there about	I	s
		this kind of narrative trick going on		
		do you see what I'm saying		el
2	S	yeah I do I just don't know whether I agree	R	rep
		with you		
3	T	don't know whether you agree with me [2]	F	e
4	T	well I think what I'm trying to do is throw the	I	s
		emphasis slightly away from character and		
		more towards the kind of techniques that the		
		author is employing		
		erm I mean I agree with what you've said that		i
		within the character and within the the fiction		
		itself it's all you know all of what you've said		
		makes perfect sense and yes I agree that it's		
		likely that the moors would have had a		

dramatic impact on Lockwood and would kind
of strip away some of this veneer of culture
that he's got I agree with that but I think also
it's Emily Bronte at work kind of driving the
narrative forward

(Teacher J - English Literature, pp. 24 -25)

This rare example of a student challenging the teacher's interpretation, however, is short lived: it is quickly brought back to the teacher's frame of reference through an informing exchange (Turn 4) in which Teacher J elaborates on his view and effectively closes down the alternative frame by moving on to explore another extract from the novel. However, later in the lesson the student is given a further opportunity to return to the topic and once again challenges the teacher's view on character development. Following her presentation, he asks if she has got anything else to add:

Exchanges			Moves	Acts
Teaching	T	anything else to add	I	el
2	S	erm well I find it quite erm Emily Bronte's made a narrative and made quite a lot of the story erm and the first one beginning although she's saying things to people throughout the novel she's interpreting people entirely we can see the change in them from erm the beginning of the novel even though it's set in the present time as she's talking to Mr Lockwood she's still creates the atmosphere the feeling of her background and where she came from at the beginning (inaudible) and then she erm paragraph number six it basically shows how the transformation of Heathcliffe Wuthering Height and Thrushcross Grange and how she's sort of erm maybe influenced them through erm I mean she's quite young at the beginning but she's now growing up she'll be	R	rep

		an adult then and she'll probably be better educated and it'll influence what she says through the direct language		
3	T	right I think you make some very very good points there I think particularly the one about the different many different voices that Nelly Dean has	F	e com
4	T	erm you know she does have all these different voices for different occasions for different parts of the story erm again though you're tending to suggest that tell me if I'm wrong but you're suggesting that Nelly Dean actually changes during the novel I mean I'm not denying that but you're saying her narration changes because she's learning and because she's growing through the novel no it's just	I	i
5	S	she does she changes from being a teenager to an err old lady throughout the novel and I can see that transformation in the language	I	i
6	T	absolutely I would agree with that	F	e
7	T	but the problem with that when we come down to it is this idea that of course she's we're supposed to believe that she's actually telling the story to Lockwood in a couple of sessions or you know three or four sessions erm so surely then she's not skilful enough perhaps she is as a narrator to imitate her own voice as it was when she was younger not to mention all the voices of all the other characters and her own voice as it kind of grows more sophisticated from her experience	I	i
8	S	perhaps it's that's a technique Emily Bronte wanted to put in I don't know I kind of	I	i
9	T	yeah yeah I mean I think I'm kind of being unkind in a way because I keep kind of throwing it back to the point of view of the novelist but I agree entirely with you what you said about erm	F	e

Nelly Dean and about the different voices involved

(Teacher J - English Literature, pp. 39 - 41)

Here the student is given an unusual opportunity, within a response slot, to elaborate at length on her views on character development which was denied her earlier in the lesson (Turn 2); and for a time, because the teacher responds to the challenge on its own terms, a less asymmetrical pedagogic relationship develops between her and the teacher. Eventually, the teacher asserts his 'right' as the 'expert' to reformulate her answer so that it fits in with his earlier frame of reference on narrative style (Turn 4). However, she does not accept this and further challenges his interpretation through two student informing exchanges (Turns 5 and 8). In response to these challenges, he suggests a 'compromise' (Turn 9) to take back control of the discourse by acknowledging the worth of her contribution while at the same time re-emphasising his 'authoritative' answer and moves on to another topic and sequence of questions.

Overall, as reflected in the total number of *student elicits*, such direct challenges to the teacher's frame of reference are rare because of his control over the I-R-E/F structure so that the students' contributions are usually restricted to the response slot with little opportunity for them to initiate challenges through questions. This episode from the literature lesson also supports Millard's (1988) view that the introduction of new theoretical positions does not necessarily lead to changes in teaching style as suggested by Peim (1986, 1993). Despite his introduction of new critical perspectives, Teacher J still seeks to impose a set of judgements on his students by offering a ready-made grid to lay over the text in order to shape their reading, rather than allowing them explore, challenge and make meanings for themselves.

In conclusion, the findings of the discourse analysis suggest that Teacher J works within an I-R-F/E structure in both lessons regardless of whether he is working with the whole class or small-group of students. Whenever he joined a group, he took over control of the discourse so that the students had to work within his frame of reference The findings therefore contrast with Teacher J's perceptions of how he teaches the two subjects as discussed in his interview. The patterning of the teaching exchanges suggest that he teaches in a didactic way across both subjects despite what would appear to be greater opportunities for the students to participate in and contribute to the classroom discourse through student informing exchanges. Nor do Teacher J's attempts to introduce new theoretical positions lead to changes in his didactic teaching style.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Focus of the study

The study has:

- Explored teachers' perceptions of differences in terms of subject paradigms and subject pedagogies between the two English subjects at A-level;

- examined the patterning of the classroom discourse in A-level English language and A-level English literature lessons taught by the same teachers to different groups of students to see if there is any variation in their teaching style across the two subjects;

- looked at the nature of teacher-led 'class discussion' which was reported by students in the ALIS survey as being the most frequently occurring instructional practice employed by teachers in A-level English teaching.

7.2 Main Points to Emerge from the Study

Following the analysis of the data according to the framework selected in Chapter 5, a number of important findings have emerged from the study:

- according to the framework of analysis outlined in this study, teachers do not vary their teaching style when teaching across the two English subjects at A-levels. This supports the statistical findings of the ALIS survey of learning activities in A-level English language and English literature lessons which also suggest a lack of pedagogic distinctiveness between the two subjects;

- teachers' perceptions of how they taught the two A-level English subjects were not borne out by the discourse analysis comparing the patterning of the two lessons;

- teacher-led recitation and teacher-directed reading and note taking activities were a predominant feature in all of twenty lessons, matching those found in the ALIS survey;

- teachers used the same discourse style (i.e. an I-R-F/E format) regardless of whether they were teaching A-level English language or English literature and whether they were working with a whole class or smaller group of students;

- within the classroom discourse, student eliciting initiations were rare, with their role within the three part exchange structure often being confined to that of respondents to teacher questions, thereby contrasting with much of the rhetoric surrounding the teaching of A-level English language and English literature in which 'good practice' is often conceived as being a seminar in which the teacher is no more than a leading participant and mediating influence in the exploration of a text.

7.3 Summary of the data

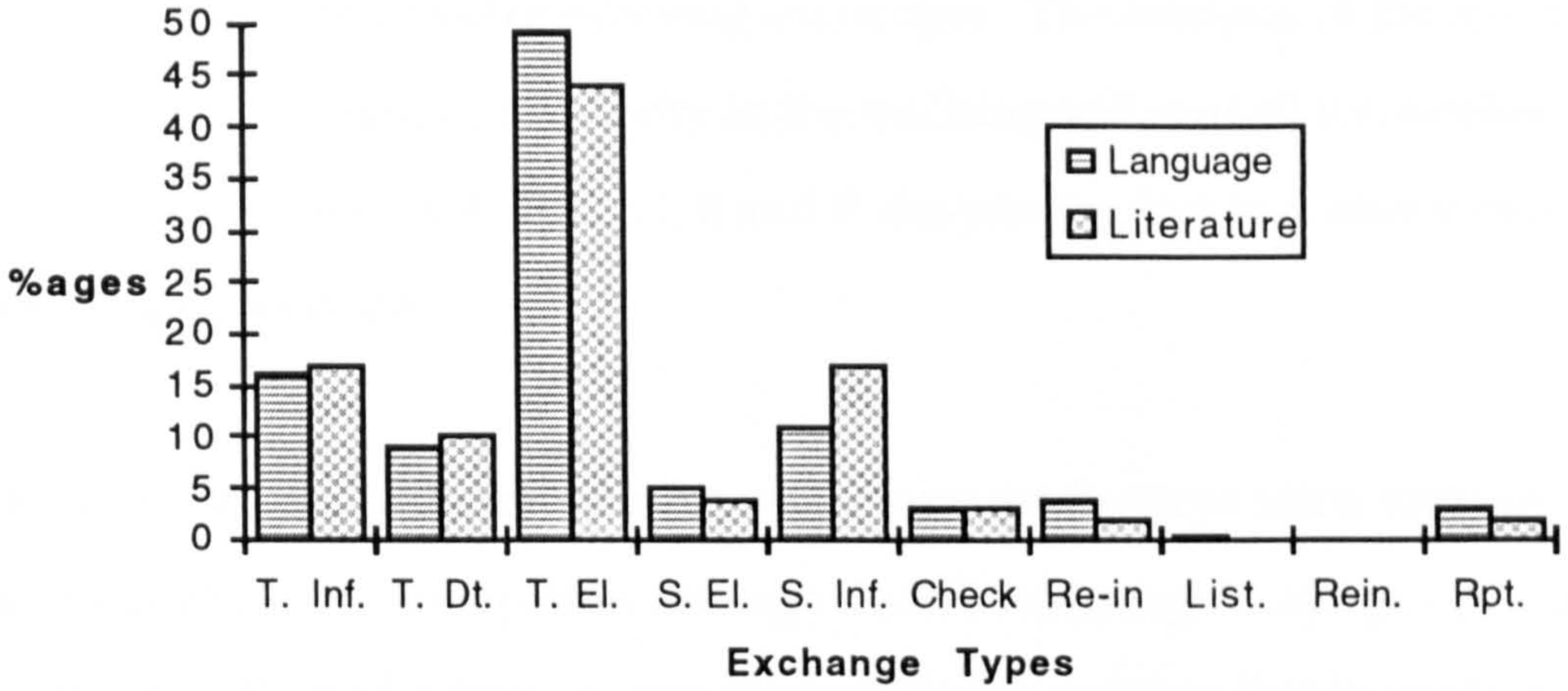
Table 12 summarises the overall results of the analysis by aggregating the teaching exchanges for all twenty lessons together with their percentage scores.

Table 12: Aggregate of the distribution of teaching exchanges and percentage scores for all ten teachers

Tch Exch.	T. In.	T. Dt.	T. El.	S. El	S. In.	Check	Re-in.	Listing.	Rein.	Rpt.
Eng. Lang.	242/ 16	136/ 9	724/ 49	71/5	164/ 11	43/3	61/4	3/0.2		47/3
Eng. Lit.	233/ 17	134/ 10	596/ 44	57/4	239/ 17	42/3	33/2			23/2

Figure 13 shows the patterning of the teaching exchanges based on the percentage scores for all ten teachers teaching across the two A-level English subjects. While there are dangers that aggregating scores in this way will distort individual differences, it does show there was little overall variation in the patterning of the teacher exchanges used by the majority of teachers in the study as they teach across the two subjects, and that teacher-presentation and teacher-directed question-and-answer dominated most of the classroom discourse in all twenty lessons, accounting for 65 and 61 percent of the total teaching exchanges in language and literature respectively.

Figure 13 - Patterning of Teaching Exchanges for all ten teachers



7.4 Findings

The next few sections will discuss the findings from the empirical chapter and the teachers' reactions to the discourse analysis, before going on to consider possible explanations for the results by setting them within the wider context of research evidence.

The framework of analysis adopted by the present study provided a clear and systematic basis for analysing the patterning of the teaching exchanges in all twenty lessons because for the majority of the time linguistic interaction, as suggested by the ALIS findings (Tymms and Vincent, 1995), was the main activity in all twenty English lessons (what Wells (1993) calls a discourse constitutive genre in which the activity is fully realised in the discourse). It also proved useful for analysing the nature of the teacher/student talk that took place in the lessons. The data collection and analysis therefore proved appropriate for illuminating the research questions which the study set out to investigate.

The findings revealed that all ten teachers worked within an I-R-F/E format across the two A-level English subjects so that there was little variation in their

teaching styles and an overwhelming predominance of teacher-directed question-and-answer and teacher-presentation as reflected in the high level of *teacher eliciting* and *teacher informing* exchanges. The analysis of the teaching exchanges also shows a similarity in the teaching styles of all ten teachers, particularly Teachers A, B, C, D, E and F, despite the fact that they varied in their teaching experience.

While the analysis of individual teachers appears to show some variation in the levels of student participation through *student informing* exchanges (see teachers G, H, I and J), the findings do not support the suggestion that in the hands of different teachers the same basic discourse format can be used for different purposes and can lead to less constrained forms of classroom discourse and very different levels of student participation and engagement (Nystrand and Gamoran, 1991; Geekie and Raban, 1993; Wells, 1993). Even where there appeared to be a higher level of student participation through *student informing* exchanges, the discourse and frames of reference were still tightly controlled by the teachers' questioning and explanations and because the third move was rigidly used in most cases to evaluate rather than extend the students' contribution.

The findings also support Cazden's (1988: 138) view that within such a discourse structure 'children never give directions to teachers and rarely ask questions except to request permission' and goes on to conclude that 'the only context in which children can reverse interactional roles with the same intellectual content, giving directions as well as following them, and asking questions as well as answering them, is with their peers'. It therefore did not lead to a more symmetrical relationship and interplay of frames between teachers and students which, according to Nystrand and Gamoran (1991: 269), would be evident in the discourse where 'as a given class session moves away from recitation towards

conversation, *authentic* questions and *uptake* become increasingly common, and teacher evaluation is transformed into just another conversant turn'.

Within Bernstein's (1990) terms, the 'intrinsically' asymmetrical relationship of transmitter and acquirer was maintained even where the students were allowed to contribute more of their ideas through student informing exchanges because their contributions were frequently assessed within the teachers' pedagogic agenda. In the case of teachers G, I and J, while the 'communicative surface' appeared to show changes in teaching style and suggest more of a decentralised form of teacher/student talk, an analysis of the 'underlying semantic' of the pedagogic exchanges revealed that they were only superficial changes: the teacher still controlled the discourse and frames of reference within which the students could work.

Overall, the analysis of the discourse reveals that whenever the teachers interacted with their students, whether it was with a whole class or small-group of students, they would take over interactional and semantic control of the discourse. This finding is also supported by other research (e.g. Edwards and Furlong, 1978; Galton, 1979; Pollard, 1984; Evans, 1985; Raban *el al*, 1994) which also suggest a strong tendency to preserve more traditional patterns of classroom talk under the appearances of organisational or curriculum change.

The findings of the present study also suggest that modes of assessment in the two A-level English subjects seemed to have little impact on the pedagogic styles of the teachers. All ten teachers were following English language syllabuses with coursework assessment (50 percent in most cases except for Teacher C who was following the London Board with 30 percent coursework) and seven of the ten teachers were also following English literature syllabuses with 50 percent coursework (i.e. Teachers B, D, E, F, G, I, J). The findings therefore do not

support the claims of commentators discussed earlier (e.g. Adams and Hopkins, 1981; Hackman, 1990; Ogborn,1990; Harrison and Mountford, 1992; Bleiman, 1993; McCulloch *et al*, 1993; Canwell and Ogborn, 1994) who suggest that coursework assessment will lead to less didactic styles of teaching and more student-centred forms of learning.

The findings of the current study suggest there is little pedagogic distinctiveness between the two A-level English subjects as many commentators discussed in Chapter 2 (and the teachers who participated in the present study) believed. The analysis revealed a lack of fit between the teachers' perception of how they teach two subjects as discussed in their interviews and their actual classroom practice. In articulating their views about the teaching of the two A-level English subjects, most of the teachers seemed to have been influenced by the stated aims and learning objectives of the syllabuses, and by the in-service training provided by the examination boards through consortia for teaching the two subjects. While all reported that they used 'discussion' as a normal and essential element of both their language and literature lessons, many felt they taught A-level literature differently because of the common practice of a using a literary text with the whole class which meant it was more teacher directed or didactic whereas language was more investigational in nature. However, the findings show a similarity in teaching style across both subjects, with the teachers usually taking the whole class of students through a text using a combination of teacher-presentation and teacher-directed question-and-answer in which only a few students participate, and with closely prescribed reading and note taking tasks.

Within Bernstein's (1990) theoretical framework the analysis of the current study shows that both subjects were taught authoritatively within strongly classified frames. The findings also supports his view that a 'hybrid' subject like English language, with apparently more weakly classified subject boundaries, does not

necessarily lead to a weakening of teaching frames. There was, therefore, little evidence of a distinctive pedagogy being used in the language lessons. Because of the teacher-centred nature of much of the English language work, there was little evidence of investigational, independent and or collaborative forms of learning being used in the lessons despite the fact that such approaches were a stated learning objective of all ten teachers in their interviews.

However, because of the 'hybrid' nature of the English language course, observations did suggest there was a blurring of the two subjects not only in terms of teaching style but also in terms of lesson content. Although all the teachers in their interviews saw differences in terms of content, with English language drawing on the study of sociolinguistics, four of the teachers used literary texts as the central focus of their language lessons (Teachers A, B, D, E) and two teachers (Teachers H and J) highlighted linguistic aspects of the literary texts in their literature lessons. As will be discussed in more detail later, this blurring in the identity of the two 'subjects' is likely to continue with developments in AS/A-level English syllabuses (e.g. NEAB, 1996) which have occurred since the data for the present study was collected, and which allow for a combination of literature and language components to create a combined syllabus as originally envisaged by the Schools Council in the mid-1970s (Dixon, 1979).

7.5 The nature of 'classroom discussion' in A-level English lessons

The discourse analysis of the twenty lessons challenges the general perception of the nature of 'classroom discussion' which was seen by the teachers in the current study and the students in ALIS survey (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) as being a central activity. As was discussed earlier in Chapter 2, in the rhetoric of A-level English teaching 'good practice' is often conceived as being a seminar, as in

higher education, in which the teacher is no more than a leading participant and mediating influence in a process of discovery. Such a notion of A-level English teaching also assumes that students have the right to challenge and question as they acquire some of the working practices of the subject and participate in the subject discourse. However, the findings from the current study challenge the assumption that teaching varies with the age and maturity of the students and that teachers draw more on the prior knowledge of students as they get older (Stevenson and Palmer, 1994). Therefore, the findings support Dillon's (1994) view that recitation is often called discussion by teachers and students, but that 'real' discussion, in which there is an exploration of a topic, an interchange of ideas and questioning by students, is rarely practised in schools even at the post-16 level.

Most of the A-level English lessons in the present study were conducted through teacher recitation where interrogations of the students' knowledge and understanding was the most common form of teacher/student interaction. This therefore limited the interactive roles the students could play in the discourse and their opportunity for higher order thinking (i.e. describing, explaining, predicting, arguing, critiquing, explicating, defining) which Ohlsson (1995) suggests can only be exercised through spoken discourse and written texts.

Therefore, for most of the time it was the teachers who were doing the cognitive work. The ubiquity of the three part exchange structure in all twenty A-level English lessons meant that they were predominantly conducted within the teacher's frame of reference. Because of the teacher's claim to prior knowledge of the subject content and right to control the pacing and sequencing of its transmission, students rarely managed to impose their own relevance outside the teacher's frame of reference. This is reflected in the type of moves they are usually restricted to within the classroom discourse, often being denied access to

initiation and evaluation moves, resulting in the very low level of student questions in the findings of the present study. It also minimised the amount of responsibility which the students were able to take for their own learning in both subject areas as they were usually dependent on the teacher's sense of relevance. In other words, in all twenty lessons it was the teacher as the authority figure who defined the 'truth' with the students making suggestions as to what they thought the truth, as the teacher sees it, might have been. The three part structure, with its series of initiations, responses and evaluations was often used by the teachers to facilitate the students' assertion of the points that they wanted them to make so that the evaluation move was frequently used to acknowledge some suggestions but rejects or corrects others in order to guide the students towards an appropriate version of the truth as they see it. The teacher was, therefore, often seen retaining control over the direction and pace of the lesson and the lines of knowledge which were to be pursued.

Such findings therefore depart considerably from notions of 'subject-minded' students who, as was discussed in Chapter 2, at this level are expected to be independent and self-reliant in their learning and able to think for themselves because of the expectation that most would go on to higher education. The teacher-led recitation, which was a common feature of all twenty lessons, therefore limited the extent to which students could take responsibility for their own learning and develop the ability to work independently and think critically. Such skills are seen by many commentators as being essential, particularly for those students continuing in full-time academic education who are largely destined for occupations demanding 'leadership' qualities and higher-order thinking skills. It is for these reasons that the didactic teaching methods revealed in the current study have often been regarded as inappropriate for inducting able students into the ways of the subject discipline because it is thought that they fail to develop higher order thinking skills and conceptual understanding.

All the data collected in the current study demonstrate clearly that many language functions are restricted by the types of moves in the discourse structure. For example, asking and ordering can only take place in an initiation move. Once participants are denied access to certain types of moves, they are denied the use of language functions which can only be expressed through those moves. In the current study, because of the wide scale use of recitation, the students had little opportunity to ask questions, evaluate each other's responses, and so on. Although the system of analysis used in the present study only focused on the organisation of language forms used in spoken interaction, and does not directly address effective learning strategies or students' cognitive development, it does nevertheless point to the lack of opportunities the students had for linguistic and cognitive development because their utterances are mainly restricted to responses. Given our current state of knowledge, Sauntson (1995) suggests that discourse analysis provides the best insight into the relationship between linguistic and cognitive development. She goes on to suggest that combined with speech acts, discourse analysis could be used to study how students are given the opportunity to develop linguistically and cognitively.

7.6 Comparison of findings with other relevant research studies

The findings of the current study suggesting there are little variations in the teaching styles of teachers who teach across the two A-level English subjects are also supported by the ALIS survey (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) discussed in Chapter 1, where over six thousand students in each of the subject areas reported more or less identical learning activities, across all twenty two Perceived Learning Activities, going on in their English language and English literature lessons. The findings of the present study also support the ALIS survey which found 'class discussion', 'reading' and 'note taking' were the most widely used

activities in A-level English lessons. However, the discourse analysis suggests that the students in the ALIS study and the teachers in the present study are describing 'recitation' as 'class discussion'.

The findings of the present study are also supported by the ESRC research comparing approaches to teaching and learning across A-level and Advanced GNVQ and BTEC National courses (Edwards, Fitz-Gibbon, Haywood and Meagher, 1996). As part of the research, 77 GNVQ Advanced and BTEC National lessons were observed together with a hundred A-level lessons: in the case of GNVQ/BTEC lessons, two thirds of the lessons were made up of business studies; in A-level lessons, over half the lessons were either business studies or economics. In making the pedagogic comparisons, it was found that in A-level classes almost three-quarters of the time was spent on verbal discourse activities and that for over half of the time students were observed answering curriculum related questions (and this was usually dominated by one or two individuals). It was also found that for the majority of the time the pedagogic agenda remained firmly with the teachers who interpreted meanings and retained control over what work was appropriate and how and when it was done. Therefore A-level students were more likely to be working on the same topic at the same time, and to have the nature and timing of the task closely prescribed.

In contrast to this, in advanced GNVQ classes verbal discourse occupied more than one-third of the time (38 percent) with students answering curriculum questions being the most frequent single activity occupying 19 percent of the time. GNVQ students were also more likely to be working on different topics and to have greater control over the pacing of their work. Therefore in A-level classes, the relatively restricted range of learning activities was dominated by teacher exposition, teacher directed question-answer exchanges similar to the findings of the present study of A-level English teaching. In the case of

Advanced GNVQs classes, while there was more variety in the range of activities engaged in by the students, there were often short bursts of formal teaching made up of teacher presentation followed by a question and answer session to introduce a topic similar to that more frequently employed in A-level lessons.

The findings of the current study are reflected in the survey of A-level English literature teaching carried out by HMI in 1985 (DES, 1986). While there is little information on the methods used to collect the classroom data and the theoretical basis for the criteria used to make the judgements, it was reported that HMI found a considerable amount of 'teacher-monologue' in evidence with questions from the teacher that 'were sometimes narrow or obscure, with a preconceived notion of the 'correct' answer, at which students aimed optimistic but erratic guesses', and some of the work which might have been 'close critical exegesis was little more than line by line paraphrase'. Such approaches were said to undermine what HMI determined to be 'good practice' illustrated through vignettes (again without theoretical or empirical justification) in which students are 'given a wide range of opportunities for discussion, so that ideas can be shared, exchanged and developed and an independence of judgement fostered' because students who work regularly together in small group 'realise that meanings can be collaboratively established and can be classified and revised in the process of talking' (DES, 1986: 8).

Similarly Harrison and Mountford (1992: 199 - 200), in their research into the impact of coursework on A-level English literature teaching in two sixth form centres, found that 'formal methods remain in evidence alongside well established consultative patterns'. They therefore suggest there were varying degrees of 'professionalism': it could mean lessons that were 'well drilled, efficient and predictable - delivering the goods in a cut-and-dried way at no great evident cost to the teacher concerned, and with no great degree of involvement

from the students' to lessons in which 'the teacher insists, by every means possible, that all involved - teacher and students - should support each other to the utmost in the Socratic hunt for learning'. However, while the two opposite versions of 'professionalism' were evident, a clear majority of the lessons were at the 'consultative' rather than 'cut-and-dried' pole.

Like HMI (DES, 1986, 1987b), they illustrate examples of 'good practice', what they term 'consultative' practice, through vignettes which show students actively involved in lessons. However, although Harrison and Mountford give more information on their methods of classroom observation (i.e. field notes recording students' and teachers' approach and contributions, content and structure of each lesson, post lesson evaluation with students, videotaping of a lesson in each centre for analysis) there was no systematic observation or analysis as in Edwards, Fitz-Gibbon, Haywood and Meagher (1996) study and in the present study. Therefore, like HMI, on the basis of their 'impressionistic' data, they may have misinterpreted what they saw. In other words, although their observations may suggest less dependence on direct teaching from the front and more contribution from the students as in the case of teachers G, I and J in the present study, an analysis of the 'underlying semantic' of the pedagogic exchanges may have revealed that they were only superficial changes to the 'communicative surface' and that the teacher still controlled the discourse and frames of reference within which the students could work.

A recent survey into A-level English literature teaching (Daw, 1996) looking at factors that seem to underlie success in this subject by able students, may also have suffered from similar weaknesses by looking only at the communicative surface of the discourse during classroom observations. While stating that a balance of teaching methods was important, it also concluded that enhancing subject knowledge was as important as focusing on pedagogy and that in-service

activities should be directed towards developing such a knowledge base. However, the findings of the present study would not support such a conclusion, where many of the teachers seemed secure in their subject knowledge but showed less awareness of their teaching styles.

7.7 Follow-up interviews with teachers

Such findings on the lack of differences in teaching styles revealed in both studies, and on the nature of classroom discussion in A-level English lessons, came as a surprise to the ten teachers involved in the small scale study. They believed, along with commentators discussed in Chapter 2, that they did teach the two subjects differently and that they created opportunities for more exploratory forms of discussion to allow for an interchange of ideas and the right to question and challenge which is thought appropriate at this level of the educational process. In follow up interviews to discuss the findings, they reported that they were disturbed by the analyses of their lessons because of their domination of the discourse in situations where they thought they were creating opportunities for the students to play a more active part.

Most of the ten teachers offered familiar explanations for these departures from how things ought to be: like HMI (DES, 1986, 1987b; 1988b; 1991), Harrison and Mountford (1992) and Macfarlane (1993), they thought that teachers are constrained towards didacticism by examinations which are narrow in what they test, more so since the reduction in coursework, and high in the rewards they carry as passports to prestigious universities, degree programmes and 'middle-class' employment achieved through such specialised academic study. They also reported that the stakes are getting higher with the publication of league tables. Similarly, they felt that the pressures to get through the syllabus and covering the required material often meant that they over employed teacher-directed methods

at the expense of creating opportunities for students to take more responsibility for their own learning. As Macfarlane (1993) suggests, it seemed that all of the teachers appreciated the benefits of tempering didactic methods but for pragmatic reasons they were forced into limiting opportunities for 'open' discussion because it could lead to distracting diversions in which the teacher loses control over the pedagogic agenda and so fails to cover the syllabus. However, all agreed, except for Teacher C, that management concerns were not a reason for their adopting an I-R-F/E framework in classes where the average group size was nine for English language and thirteen for English literature.

Many felt that there was a 'subject culture' (see next section) which they themselves had been inculcated into at school and university by which traditional practices were perpetuated, and that this heavily influenced their teaching style. As a result of the findings, all of the ten teachers thought there was a need for more classroom observation and analysis of their teaching. They were therefore interested in follow-up studies in order to develop alternative discourse strategies to recitation through which they could encourage student discussion so as to give them more opportunities for input and control over the discourse.

7.8 Possible explanations as to the causes of the findings of the present study

In looking for other explanations for the apparent lack of differences in the way the two English subjects at A-level are taught, beyond these familiar explanations, it would seem that both English language and English literature are regarded as being academic subjects drawing on well-established academic disciplines with specialised bodies of knowledge and working practices, and with their own criteria of relevance and worth. Therefore, although A-level

English language is seen by many as being a 'hybrid' subject, it is still perceived as an academic subject because it draws upon the study of sociolinguistics in higher education in the same way that A-level English literature draws on the study of an established literary canon. In other words, in A-level English language knowledge is still represented in traditional academic terms rather than an applied study 'regionalised' into 'areas of application' (Bernstein, 1990: 63). This is despite its stated aim of encouraging investigational, independent and collaborative forms of learning and assessment normally associated with vocational alternatives, and its concern with the study of language and its uses so as to increase students' language skills. Both A-level English subjects could therefore be seen as having disciplinary boundaries around them, which may have contributed to the transmissional forms of teaching reported in the present study, in which the canonical knowledge is authoritatively transmitted.

In Bernstein's (1990) terms therefore, as discussed earlier (section 2.19), it seems that A-level English language is no less strongly defined (or classified) as an academic subject than English literature which leads to a hierarchical (or strongly framed) relationship between teacher and taught. This is supported by the empirical findings of the present study where it was found that the teacher often controls the content, sequence and pace of what is being learned, and then evaluates students' performance against criteria of relevance and correctness derived from the established body of knowledge. Therefore conservative fears (e.g. O'Hear, 1991a; Pilkington, 1991) that 'hybrid' subjects like English language are undermining the teacher's authority in an established body of knowledge, and the 'proper' relationship of teacher and taught because they are not disciplined by the rule and practices of an established academic tradition, are not borne out by the current study which shows a domination of teacher-controlled recitation of prescribed knowledge.

Other studies looking at dimensions of teacher development and teaching style (e.g. Joyce and Showers, 1988; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Wall and Alderson, 1993) suggest that teachers are slow to change their ways of teaching and new teaching methods or innovations are not readily taken on. It could be that teachers, as Tymms and Vincent (1995) argue, are inherently conservative in their approach as change risks failure in the eyes of their students and this is not something most teachers take lightly. Tharp and Gallimore (1988: 191) suggest that because innovation and change always costs time, anxiety, and uncertainty it is essential that teachers have supportive interactions with peers through modelling and feedback if the 'recitation script', as uncovered in the present study, is to be changed to 'new repertoires of complex social behaviour necessary from responsive teaching'.

Teachers' conservatism in teaching styles, of the kind found in the current study, may result from the images of teaching which are culturally transmitted and deeply internalised so that they find it difficult to imagine that knowledge, information and skills could possibly be transmitted in any other way than through teacher recitation. Lortie (1975), in exploring this socialising of teachers, highlighted 'apprenticeship by observation', a process in which experiences of being taught for thousands of hours as a pupil internalises a model of teaching. This view is supported by research into student teachers' developing expertise in classroom teaching during their initial training and the first year of teaching (e.g. Bird, Anderson and Swidler, 1993; Bramald, Hardman and Leat, 1995; Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Calderhead and Shorrock, 1994; Knowles, 1992; Powell, 1992). This body of research has focused on student teachers' thinking and how this relates to classroom practice. It suggests student teachers have definite ideas or images about teaching and learning when they start out in their pre-service courses which have developed from their own educational experience and which shape their perceptions of teaching and developing

classroom practice, thereby merely reinforcing the status quo. The special importance of images is that in being models for action for starting teachers which simplify complex processes, there is a very strong tendency for them to actualise the model (Kagan, 1992). Therefore the concept of images of teaching is used to explain why many teachers are not substantially influenced by their training course experience.

Research into classroom discourse also suggests such experiences and images of teaching, as discussed above, are developed from a very early age (e.g. Geekie and Raban, 1993; Hughes, 1994; Mehan, 1979; Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Willes, 1983) because children have to learn about the patterning of classroom talk as a pre-requisite to being viewed as competent participants in that setting and which will serve them throughout the rest of their school careers (Edwards and Westgate, 1994). The familiar patterning of the three-part exchange structure is also frequently replicated in children's play when they take on the role of teacher (Simon and Boyer, 1975). Given these powerful cultural influences, it is therefore not surprising that teachers should draw upon such implicit knowledge when faced with the problem of managing large numbers of students in the classroom.

Research into small group teaching in higher education, on which the A-level 'seminar' is often said to model itself, also suggests that recitation is a dominant feature at this level despite the evidence that such methods can promote discussion skills and higher order cognitive responses (Kulik and Kulik, 1979; Brown and Atkins, 1988). For example Foster (1981) found tutor talk in tutorials to be as high as 86 per cent and student-student interactions to be as low as 8 per cent. Ellner (1983) reports that in small group teaching the transmission of information was the major mode of discourse and that the questioning rarely went beyond the recall of information and that the quality of thinking was low. Similarly Hegarty (1978) and Barnes (1980) looked at levels of thinking displayed

in small group teaching and found that over 80 per cent of the discourse was concerned with recall and clarification rather than with interpreting, evaluating and speculating. Therefore, given the characteristics of teacher talk which research suggests dominates all stages of schooling, including higher education, it is hardly surprising that such practices are perpetuated by new entrants to the teaching profession.

Another possible explanation for the similarity in the patterning of the student/teacher interactions across both English subjects at A-level could be that teachers have a preferred style of teaching and learning which attracted them to the subject and which suggests there are subject cultures (Ball and Lacey, 1994). This argument is supported by the ALIS data (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) which shows substantial differences between the reported learning activities used across the twelve A-level subjects in the study. Similarly, Kingdon (1991: 47) argues that because teachers of A-level are usually from 'a relatively closed academic system in which all A-level teachers were themselves the products of universities, most of the pupils came from grammar schools and independent schools, and university places were limited' they are part of an academic culture whose practices are perpetuated in their A-level teaching.

In the case of A-level English literature teachers, Leach (1992), drawing on a survey of the teaching of Shakespeare at A-level, suggests that such teachers, as examples of students who have successfully achieved the qualifications and surmounted the hurdles provided by the British education system, have been inculcated into ways of seeing, understanding and teaching English literature. They therefore feel constrained to teach literature in the same way that they themselves were taught. The teachers in the present study, as discussed above, certainly thought this to be the case. This, argues Leach, encourages a 'traditional' range of classroom techniques which includes: students in desks,

teacher at the front in the position of power and purveyor of wisdom, knowledge and information, line-by-line examination and explication of the text involving complex explanation of words and phrases, followed by essays which are expected to take on acceptable critical stances. However, Hodgson (1994) suggests that the pedagogic differences between subjects as revealed in the ALIS data (Tymms and Vincent, 1995) may be tactical variations on didactic teaching rather than a departure from it depending upon the kinds of learning which are perceived as being effective by teachers and students within the different subject areas.

Such research and commentary, as discussed above, therefore suggests the need for more powerful teacher education programmes which get novice and experienced teachers to challenge such beliefs and practices through critical reflection (c.f. Bramald, Hardman and Leat, 1995 for further discussion). It also suggests a need for teacher education programmes to make this 'invisible pedagogy' (Bernstein, 1990) more visible, or as Edwards and Westgate (1994: 98) suggest 'making the familiar strange', if there is be any change in the status quo. One such example of this is peer-coaching (Joyce and Showers, 1988, Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) where in-service education is followed by extensive practice and coaching in the classroom in which observation and feedback focuses on specific features of teacher behaviour such as the I-R-F/E exchange. However, official reports and research (HMI, 1981a; HMI, 1981b; Meighan and Harber, 1986) suggest that authoritarian approaches of listening to someone else are adopted in most initial teacher training courses. It was found that many course programmes were heavily dependent on the set lecture and that tutorials were almost equally dominated by the tutor, thereby replicating and reinforcing the students' experiences of school and suggesting the need for similar research programmes in teacher education.

Other explanations as to the causes of the findings of the present study, which shows little variation in the teaching styles of A-level English teachers as they teach across the two subjects and the domination of the classroom discourse by teacher-led recitation, are possible and could be the subject of further investigation along with studies into the effectiveness of teaching styles and classroom innovations.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHING OF A-LEVEL ENGLISH AND FURTHER RESEARCH

8.1 Introduction

The findings of the current study reveal that A-level English teaching, across both subjects at this level, is dominated by transmissional forms of teaching centred on teacher exposition and sequences of teacher-directed question-and-answer arising from it in which recall or comprehension of authoritative information are in practice the main goals. Therefore 'normal' classroom discourse at this level is recitation, where typically the teacher asks a series of pre-planned questions, initiates all the topics, and rarely interacts with the substance of the students' answers except to evaluate them. As a result, 'real' discussion as defined by Dillon (1994), in which there is the exploration of a topic and interchange of ideas to enable higher order thinking, seems to be rarely practised at this level supporting Dillon's own findings from a comprehensive review of research evidence with 16/17 year old students (i.e. A-level equivalents) in the United States of America.

Clearly this has implications for the kinds of moves they can make in the classroom discourse and for their linguistic and cognitive development. It also suggests the need for the exploration and researching of alternative teaching and learning strategies which will help to raise the quality of teachers' interactions with their students and which will promote wider communicative (and hence more cognitively demanding) options to those in which students are often mere listeners or respondents within an I-R-F/E mode. This chapter will therefore consider the implications of the findings of this study for the teaching of English at A-level and for future research into classroom discourse at this phase of education and beyond.

8.2 Researching alternatives to pedagogic recitation

As was discussed in Chapter 2, research into the constructivist function of dialogue and learning suggests that classroom discourse is not effective unless students play an active part in their learning. It therefore questions the value of the linguistic and cognitive demands made on students within the traditional I-R-F/E format, as demonstrated in the present study, where the students are mainly expected to be passive and to recall, when asked, what they have learned and to report other people's thinking. The social constructivist view of learning therefore suggests students' cognitive development may benefit from wider communicative options.

The social constructivist view of learning, which Barnes and Todd (1995) take to be widely accepted amongst educationalists, indicates that our most important learning does not take place through the addition of discrete facts to an existing store but by relating new information, new experiences, new ways of understanding to existing understanding of the matter in hand. One of the most important ways of working on this understanding is through talk, particularly group talk, in which students are given the opportunity to assume greater control over their own learning by initiating ideas and responses and which consequently promotes articulate thinking. Therefore small group talk is seen as providing opportunities for conversation between peers which if orientated towards learning can provide for the generation of new ideas, new insights and more complex points of view. If the student is allowed to contribute to the shaping of the verbal agenda in this way, then this is found to be more effective in developing the students' own cognitive framework. According to this widely accepted view of learning, such an approach should also allow for alternative frames of reference which are open to negotiation and where the criteria of relevance are not imposed.

As discussed in Chapter 2, this view of teaching and learning has also influenced much of the literature on modes of learning in GNVQ and A-level which suggests a considerable convergence in modes of learning between the two tracks (see Edwards, 1995b) because of academic courses needing to develop 'qualities of mind' demanded by the labour market and the need for 'transferable' skills in vocational courses in which the ability to gather, interpret and act on information is given priority (Hodkinson, 1989, 1991a, 1991b; 1992; Carr, 1993; Hyland, 1993; Lewis, 1994). It is argued that such skills and attitudes are needed in a modern workforce at most levels of employment so that it is an economic necessity for education and training to develop self reliance, flexibility and breadth through learning methods which encourage initiative and autonomy. It is therefore claimed that there has been a shift towards more 'student-centred' forms of learning in both curricular 'traditions'.

Similarly, Cazden (1995: 159) suggests that the constructivist model is also increasingly being seen in terms of the requirements being made of students entering higher education and the labour market because of the social and economic developments in most advanced societies demanding that schools develop 'deeper understanding of knowledge, greater flexibility of skills, and more interpersonal competences for all students than many of the elite achieved in the past'. Therefore, in much of the literature surrounding the teaching of GNVQ and A-level, communication, collaborative learning and group problem-solving are being seen as 'transferable skills' which both advanced tracks are expected to develop in preparation for either higher education or employment. In other words, they are both seen as encouraging initiative and autonomy.

The need to create such opportunities for students to interact in such a way so as to exercise their cognitive and communicative competence to maximum effect has led to alternative strategies to a recitation format being advocated (e.g.

Dillon's (1994) use of statements, signals, silences, student question; Nystrand and Gamoran's (1991) 'high-level evaluation'; Wells (1993) 'extending feedback'; Woods (1992) 'low control' moves). They all aim to break the I-R-F/E cycle and enable a wider range of discourse moves by students. There is, however, a pressing need for more systematic research into the effectiveness of such teaching strategies which aim to develop positive kinds of teacher-involved discourse which move from recitation to a more conversational style of interaction and enable a wider range of discourse moves for students, and for valid means of describing and evaluating what is happening in classroom discourse .

The constructivist perspective on classroom discourse has also brought with it the need for criteria which measure the cognitive as well as the interactive dimension of classroom talk. However, as Westgate and Hughes (in press) suggest, one of main problems facing researchers of classroom discourse is that of identifying and measuring the 'quality' of classroom talk in which there is a high level of interaction and cognitive engagement by the students. Much of the work in this area has been carried out in small groups without the presence of a teacher (Barnes and Todd 1977/1995, Bennett and Cass, 1989, Wiltshire, 1989; Corden, 1991). These studies looked at cognitive strategies and evidence of abstract levels of thinking (e.g. speculating, reasoning, recollecting, interpreting, hypothesising) and allowed for an interplay of alternative frames of reference. There is, therefore, a pressing need for research to develop criteria which are able to characterise different kinds of teacher-involved discourse in some way and which could be related to an explicit evidential base. From such criteria, it would be hoped rational judgements could be made concerning the quality of teacher/student as well as peer group talk in terms of its interactive and cognitive function, based on evidence of a more generalisable kind which would be 'visible' within the spoken 'text'.

Halligan (1988), Nystand and Gamoran (1991), Des-Fountain and Howe, 1992 and Westgate and Hughes (In press) suggest that the 'quality' of classroom discourse can be measured by the way in which it resembles conversation; here students are most likely to be substantially engaged when the treatment of subject matter allows for extensive interaction, with students and the teacher following up on each other's statements. In short, in this form of discourse there is said to be a higher level of student initiation, thinking and reciprocal listening, and a building of contribution on contribution so that shared understandings are elaborated, built on, and revised (Nystrand and Gamoran, 1988). Such an approach is also said to form a middle-ground mix of teacher-guided but not teacher-dominated pedagogy (Mercer, 1992b; Wood, 1992; Geekie and Raban, 1993; Corden, 1995).

Therefore the notion of reciprocity is seen as a common criterion for 'quality talk', both in small-group talk and whole class discussion where teachers give a supportive lead, and is deemed desirable from a constructivist standpoint (Barnes and Todd, 1995). It is also suggested that these aspects of classroom discourse give a thematic coherence to the talk by interweaving discussion topics as the teacher and students take turns speaking and serve to sustain student-initiated ideas and responses and consequently promote higher-order thinking.

However, as can seen in the findings of the current study, in transmission-teaching the authority of the teacher as expert is rarely relinquished or eroded so as to allow for the interplay of alternative frames of reference and relevance. This has led some commentators and researchers (e.g. Edwards, 1987/1992; French, 1990) to question whether that real 'ownership' of the discourse by students is ever possible in whole class talk. They suggest that this can only be achieved in collaborative small-group work where the turn-taking is managed locally and interactionally, and where speakers have equal rights and joint

ownership of the interaction and frames of reference which draw on the students' own experience and knowledge which they bring to the learning situation. It also gives them more responsibility for and control over the learning process.

Corden (1991, 1992, 1995) suggests this points to the need for further research into the effectiveness of group work, particularly into the roles that teachers can play in such work. As was seen in the current study, whenever teachers intervened in a small group-talk, they usually took over control of the discourse and frame of reference which the students had to recognise, assimilate and move into in order to attain success in term of academic recognition.

However, for small-group talk to be effective, Corden (1992) suggests that the teacher needs to abdicate a central transmission role and adopt a whole new set of roles which offer a variety of audiences to the students which get beyond that of examiner/evaluator (i.e. responding to students' expertise, responding as a working group member, responding as a neutral chairperson, responding as a source of information, responding as an equal, responding as a learning partner, responding with minimal intervention) and which can be moved in and out of in a fluid and dynamic way. Thus, in relinquishing the central transmission role, far from having a diminished authoritative position, the teacher's expertise is used in understanding how students learn, encouraging and creating effective learning climates, developing interpersonal relationships and knowing when and how to intervene productively. Such deliberate interventions by teachers, however, need to be tested in action so that it is known what these roles look like and so as to be translated into practical advice for teachers. As suggested above, the development of more precise analytical procedures will also be needed so that a much firmer evidence base can enlighten such practices.

A corollary to the above research would be further research and exploration of *student-competence* in such contexts. As Dillon (1994) and Westgate and Hughes (In press) suggest, 'higher levels' of interactive and cognitive contribution on the part of students can only be expected to be displayed through more developed conversational competence of such kinds. This may entail 'training' of the kind discussed in Chapter 2, which takes into consideration students' perceptions and attitudes which they bring to small-group talk the part it plays in the learning process so as to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for effective participation in such work.

The findings of the current study, pointing to a lack of fit between teachers' perceptions of their teaching and classroom practice in the teaching of A-level English language and English literature, also suggest the need for monitoring and self-evaluation to become a regular part of initial and in-service training as advocated by Joyce and Showers (1988). Similarly, Dillon (1994) and Westgate and Hughes (In press) suggest that talk-analysis feedback may be a useful tool whereby sympathetic discussion by groups of teachers of data (recordings and transcriptions) derived from their own classrooms could be an effective starting point for professional development. Barnes and Todd (1995: 105) also argue that research, as in the present study, will need to go hand-in-hand with professional development for teachers since 'beginning to set up opportunities for students to learn through collaborative talk is much more than a change in their perception of their own roles and those of students in the process of teaching and learning'. As the present study suggests, it is a challenging agenda requiring 'hard' evidence from classroom contexts analysed by qualitative approaches and markers of 'quality' which do justice to the contextual complexities of the classroom.

8.3 Implications for the teaching of post-16 English

Since carrying out the empirical work for the present study, new syllabuses for A-level English language and English literature have been published by all the examination boards for first examination in 1996. They resulted from a review of the principles (SEAC, 1992) which should govern syllabus development at A-level. The review collided with John Major's determination to get back to traditional, transmissional styles of teaching through a basically coursework free examination system so that the 20 percent coursework ceiling became an official part of the A/AS syllabus framework document defining the core content, concepts and skills and assessment objectives published by SEAC in July 1993. Each A-level English syllabus had to follow the core concepts and skills and assessment objectives which were designed to present the subject as a discipline with theories and methodologies which should form part of the knowledge and understanding students develop during an A-level course. Four cores were produced: English literature, English language, English language and literature and English (the fourth being back-burnered 'for the time being'). Four new 'hybrid' A-level English language and English literature syllabuses were on offer together with two new A-level English language syllabuses from UCLES and AEB joining NEAB and ULEAC. The examination boards therefore claimed that the new syllabuses allowed for the opportunity to combine examination components from English language and English Literature and for a flexibility of approach which embraces open book examination and written and spoken coursework.

In the case of English literature, Greenwell (1994) argues that the core differs little from the common core statement about English literature A-level published by the GCE boards in 1983 which also stipulated the study of Shakespeare and of all three literary genres and at least one text from pre-1900. The traditional literary

canon therefore remains central although the new core adds a requirement that students understand, and will be required to demonstrate knowledge of, the contexts in which literary works are written and understood which some see as moving towards a critical analysis approach. Similarly, the A-level English language core requires students to acquire a body of linguistic knowledge, to investigate an aspect of language development, to re-cast or adopt material from one genre to another, and to produce original writing. Greenwell (1994) therefore suggests such changes will have little impact on the content and learning objectives of A/AS level English language and English literature syllabuses and he expresses similar reservations on the impact of the new hybrid syllabuses and their currency in higher education.

According to Greenwell (1994) the greatest impact of the new syllabuses will be on teaching approaches to A-level English resulting from the coursework restrictions and greater emphasis being given to final examinations. It will not only limit the range of texts that can be studied but also encourage more transmissional forms of teaching. However, as the present study suggests, there is no guarantee that a return to more flexible forms of assessment through an increase in the proportion of coursework allowed will necessarily lead to independent forms of learning traditionally associated with A-level English although it puts a further restriction on the possibility of promoting such forms of teaching and learning.

As discussed earlier (Chapter 2: 2.2) the whole future of the A-level curriculum looks uncertain following Mrs Thatcher's rejection of the Higginson Report (DES, 1988a) with its far-sighted recommendation for a post-16 curriculum based on a wider range of learner A-levels, with an emphasis on concepts and skills rather than factual content and more varied modes of assessment, and the more recent restriction on coursework cementing A-level in place as the 'gold standard'. This

ensured that the vocational/academic divide would continue to bedevil planning post-16.

Nor does the matter look like being resolved by the latest recommendations of the Dearing Report (1996) whose review was hamstrung by political imperatives right from the start because of the government's brief that he was not to abolish or otherwise devalue the 'purity' of A-level or introduce a baccalaureate as originally envisaged in the Institute for Public Policy Research's publication on the British version: *A British 'baccalaureate': ending the division between education and training* (IPPR, 1990). The Conservative government has continued to insist on retaining three types of post-compulsory qualification (A-level, GNVQ, NVQ), despite all the connotations of a hierarchy of gold, silver and iron, because (as Secretary of State Gillian Shepherd put it in 1996) while each deserved respect it was also 'right that they remain distinct'. Wanting them to be different but also equal and to end the familiar polarising of the academic and the vocational, Sir Ron Dearing's tactical solution was to recommend replacing both the formal label of Advanced GNVQa and their Ministerial designation as Vocational A-levels with the brand-name of Applied A-levels. This would have allowed for the redesignation of A-level subjects like English language, communication studies and media studies as Applied A-levels with a distinct approach to learning based on the application of knowledge' (Dearing, 1995:12). However, this was flatly rejected by Ministers, with an accompanying claim that Sir Ron had changed his mind.

Therefore the 'logical' conclusion of his drive for comparable standards and common material whereby students should mix and match academic and vocational courses does not appear in the final report. An earlier proposal for a single over-arching diploma, possibly looking too much like a baccalaureate, was therefore watered down to one of three parallel options which added further

confusion and reflected the fact that the influence of A-level as a high status qualification could not be underestimated.

It also may prohibit the development of a unitary concept of post-16 English combining aspects of language, literature and media education in which all students would participate in order to develop their competence in the use of spoken and written language and to give them tools to analyse critically and understand the manipulation of language across a range of literary, media and non-literary texts. This would have been possible if subjects like media studies, communication studies and English language had been designated as 'applied' rather than academic studies. The present arrangements will ensure that English literature remains an arcane area of study which is perceived as having a higher status than recent alternatives at English A-level because it is supposedly a more purely academic form of study.

8.3 Resume

The present study has compared the way A-level English language and English literature are taught by teachers who teach across the two subjects by examining the patterning of the classroom discourse at this level of education. The research questions (p. 15) have been addressed throughout and insights into the patterning of the classroom discourse revealed which show a similarity in the way the two A-level English subjects are taught and the ubiquity of the three-part (I-R-F/E) structure at this stage of education. The findings have also revealed a lack of fit in the teachers' perceptions of how the two subjects are taught and their classroom practice. Despite a commitment on the part of the teachers, as expressed in their interviews, to student-centred forms of learning by engaging the students in discussion so as to express their views and challenge the views of others, and to promote a spirit of enquiry and independent thought,

there was little evidence of such forms of learning taking place. The analysis showed that the lessons were characterised by a traditional transmission teaching mode with the teachers-as-expert dispensing knowledge through their use of recitation. This usually prevented an interplay of alternative frames of reference so that the discourse was kept strictly within the teacher's pedagogic agenda, thereby limiting the discourse functions and the roles that the students could play. The implications of these insights for classroom practice in A-level English teaching and for future research have also been considered.

By focusing on the central role of the teacher in shaping the classroom discourse, the present study has not addressed the use of collaborative, small-group work in the teaching and learning process in A-level English. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is suggested that in teacherless groups, students are more likely to engage in exploratory, hypothetical discourse, to generate their own ideas and to assume more control over the learning process. By removing the teacher from a central, authoritative position it is argued that restraints and control over the discourse and frame of reference, as revealed in the present study, will be removed. In other words, collaborative, small-group work is said to offer a much wider choice of interactional patterns than that offered within a whole class, transmissional model of teaching.

The collaborative classroom approach is also said to be rooted in a social constructivist view of learning which rejects the passive role assigned to students under the traditional transmission model. It is suggested that the collaborative mode disperses power and invests students with more responsibility and control over the learning process and draws on their own knowledge, experiences and relationships so as to 'remove the absolute priority of the teacher's frame of reference and allow for possibilities of idiosyncratic meanings' (Salmon and Clare, 1984: 5). The present study suggests, however, that teachers will need to

adopt a variety of roles and audiences beyond that of expert, examiner or evaluator (Corden, 1992) when interacting with students in collaborative, small-group work in order to prevent a replication of whole class recitation in such work. By adopting these organisational arrangements, the teacher's role becomes even more crucial: in abdicating a central transmission role, the teacher will have to assume a whole new set of potential roles and subsequent audiences to offer the students.

The present study has shown that although a large proportion of the time in A-level English lessons is spent in talking and listening, it is dominated by teacher exposition and teacher-directed question and answer sessions so that students spend a considerable proportion of their time as passive recipients of information with little opportunity of real discussion through an interchange of ideas. Therefore their opportunities are limited for developing the discourse skills necessary for reasoned thought. This study has suggested that the challenge for teachers of A-level English, whether in language or literature, is to stimulate students both linguistically and cognitively through a variety of interventions. Such interventions needs to be based on an understanding of how students learn, and developed through critical study and observation of classroom practice so as to bring about the desired pedagogic changes.

It also points to the need for an overhaul of the post-16 English (or some would prefer communication) curriculum so that it is based on a unitary concept incorporating language, literature and media education. Such a curriculum could be followed by all students as part of an over-arching diploma to ensure an inclusive approach similar to the baccalaureate examination in France and the international baccalaureate, although with less of a subject-fixated focus.

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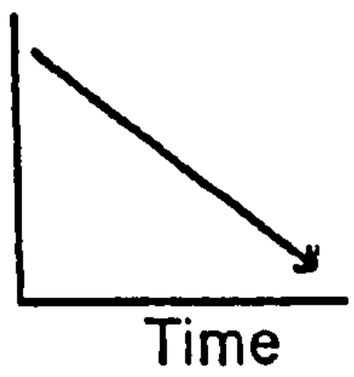
Appendix 1

From <Language Change> to <Correctness>

For much of the following material I am indebted to to the following linguists:

Lars-Gunnar Andersson / Peter Trudgill : Bad Language

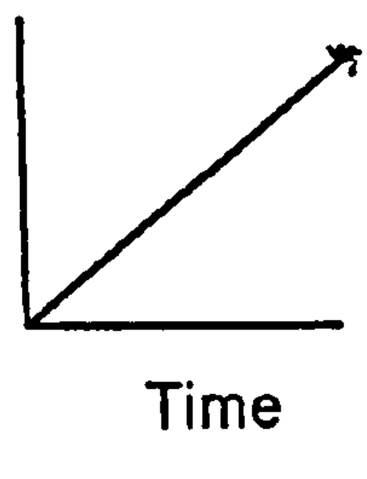
Language Change : Progress or Decay??



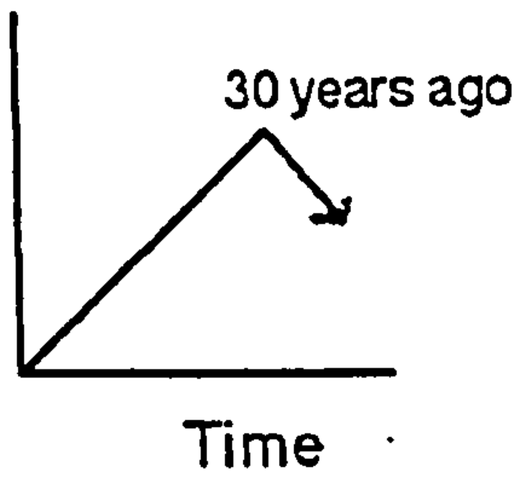
In the beginning was the word of God, and the word was with God and the word was God.

<God created language>
A process of degeneration

Its getting better all the time.



<Language is part of evolution>



<Fings aint wot they used to be>

When I was your age I would never have spoken to my parents like that.

It is often argued that one of the causes of <deterioration> is the misuse of language - or the use of <bad> language.

In schools pupils are often criticised for the use of bad English and bad language?
These two terms are often confused.
What are the differences between bad English and bad language?

<bad> language	<bad> English
damn	give is it / gissit

Bad Language

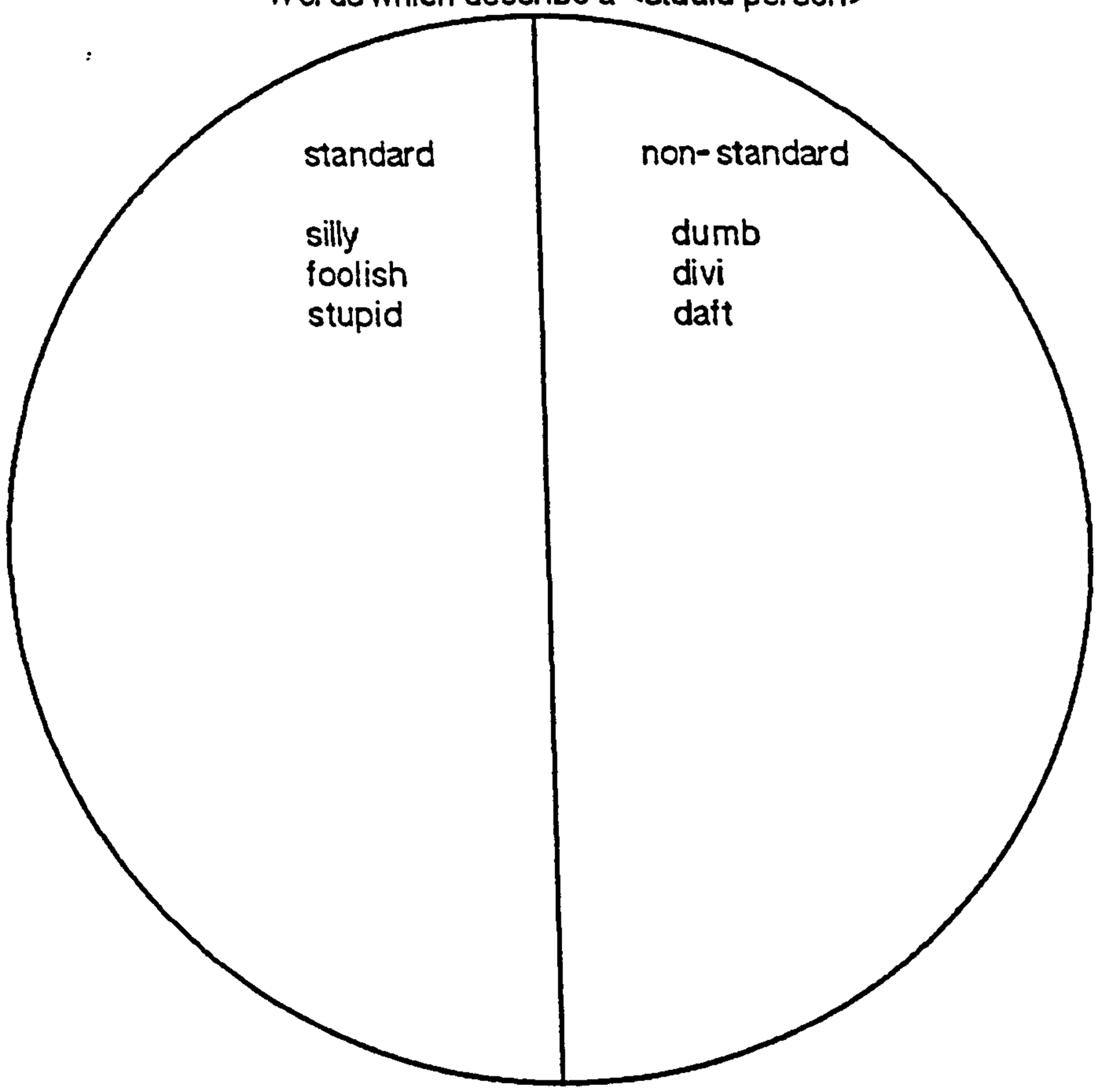
We describe language that we do not like as <bad language>. What is <bad language>?

Swearing / Taboo Examples :

Neologisms / Slang

It is often argued that bad language or slang is lazy or uninventive. However, there are many words in current usage which can be used in one particular field; some of them are standard. some non-standard. Complete the following semantic sphere with lexical items which belong to each type.

Words which describe a <studid person>



Question : Do non-standard forms add or detract from the language?

Question : Have some of the non-standard forms shown signs of becoming standard forms? Are they becoming acceptable?

Question : What do we mean by <bad language>?

List some examples.

The Ant

'One sunny day a Ant went for a walk. His mother said to watch out for that hunggre Anteater. The ant ceeped walking until he got a bit tierd. He stopped and looked around to see if there where aney hunggre anteaters around but he could not see aney. So he lead down and fal a sleep. As he was a sleep the anteater was spieing on Him from a tree. The anteater thourght about ant on toest with a bit of ralish. He got so exsitted he fall of the tree with a bag. The ant wocke up and as qiuck of a flash the anteater pounced on him. The anteater said 'I am going to eat you up'. but the ant thourght a mint and he came up with an I dear? Eat me them but down throu me in that hole. The anteater siad I am going to throught you in that hole. So he did but the anteater did not now that it was the army ants base. When ant got to the bottem he preasted a red bottem and these army ants came out and atacked the anteater. and the ant and his mother lived happly ever after. The End.'

Appendix 2

The Tyger

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare sieze the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

emotion
passion
Love
suffering
heat
Burning
pain
destruction
fire
suffering
heat
sickness
light
colour
dense
dangerous
forest
strange
exotic
darkness
night
unknown
fear
low
Hell
deeps
unknown
death
light
skies
heaven
high

Appendix 3

Extract form 'A Clockwork Orange'

We fillied round what was called the backtown for a bit, scaring old vecks and cheenas that were crossing the roads and zigzagging after cats and that. Then we took the road west. There wasn't much traffic about, so I kept pushing the old noga through the floorboards near, and the Durango 95 ate up the road like spaghetti. Soon it was winter trees and dark, my brothers, with a country dark, and at one place I ran over something big with a snarling toothy rot in the head-lamps, then it screamed and squelched under and old Dim at the back near laughed his gulliver off - 'Ho ho ho' - at that. Then we saw one young malchick with his sharp, lubbilubbing under a tree, so we stopped and cheered at them, then we bashed into them both with a couple of half-hearted tolchocks, making them cry, and on we went. what we were after now was the old surprise visit. That was a real kick and good for smecks and lashings of the ultra-violet. We came at last to a sort of village, and just outside this village was a small sort of a cottage on its own with a bit of a garden. The Luna was well up now, and we could viddy this cottage fine and clear as I eased up and put the brake on, the other three giggling like bezoomny, and we could viddy the name on the gate of this cottage veshch was HOME, a gloomy sort of a name. I got out of the auto, ordering my droogs to shush their giggles and act like serious, and I opened this malenky gate and walked up to the front door. I knocked nice and gentle and nobody came, so I knocked a bit more and this time I could slooshy somebody coming, then a bolt drawn, then the door inched open an inch or so, then I could viddy this one glazz looking out at me and the door was on a chain. 'Yes? Who is it?' It was a sharp's goloss, a youngish devotchka by her sound, so I said in a very refined manner of speech, a real gentleman's goloss:

Student's pastiche of 'A Clockwork Orange'

On a clock a time ago, there twas a twit twoo. It's pad was on big leaf and he spyed everything that stalked past. One dripping day he sawed a man plodding with a black and white beef. Another him trondled along and the twit twoo peered the man switching the milk and cheese for three beans.

The beggining man walked to a patch and stuffed the Heinz in the brown flaky soft rock. He went off and wandered back the day next, nothing changed.

Appendix 4

From 'Oxford Companion to the English language'

English spelling. The spelling of English has traditionally been discussed (and often taught) in terms of rules and exceptions. For example, the rule that the *ee* combination in *meet*, *sleep*, etc., stands for a single long /i/ sound, but the fact that the long /i/ sound can be represented in other ways, as in *be*, *sea*, *key*, *quay*, *ski*, *esprit*, *deceit*, *field*, *people*, *amoeba/ameba*, *aeon/eon*, *leave*, *these*. Similarly, there is a rule that *c* before *a/o/u* is hard (*cat*, *cot*, *cut*) but before *e/i* is soft (*cent*, *cite*), with such exceptions as *façade* on the one hand and a common pronunciation of *Celtic* on the other. Word forms that conflict with the phonographic principle are common: (1) Those with aberrant letter values, such as the *a* in *any*, the *e* in *sew*, the *g* in BrE *gaol*, the *gh* in *laugh*, the *l* in *colonel*, the *o* in *woman* and *women*, the *s* in *sugar*, the *x* in *xenophobia*, and the *z* in *schizophrenia*. (2) Those with silent letters, such as the *a* in *head*, the *b* in *thumb*, the *c* in *indict*, the *e* in *height*, the *g* in *foreign*, the *h* in *honest*, the *k* in *knee*, the *n* in *column*, the *p* in *ptarmigan*, the *t* in *castle*, and the *w* in *write*. (3) Those that carry over all or something of their non-English spelling from other languages, such as the *au* in *bazaar* (from Persian), the *c* in *cello* (from Italian), the *dd* in *eisteddfod* (from Welsh), the *ch* and *y* in *chrysanthemum* (from Latinized Greek), the *chs* in *fuchsia* (from Latinized German), and the *j* in *marijuana* (from Spanish).

In 1948, the phonetician Daniel Jones and dialectologist Harold Orton published a system called *New Spelling*, the recommended orthography of the SSS, of which the following is a specimen:

> We rekwier dhe langgwej as an instroument; we mae ausloe study its history. Dhe presens ov unpronounst leterz, three or for diferent waez ov reprezenting dhe sem sound, three or for uesez ov dhe same leter: aul dhis detrakts from dhe value ov a langgwej az an instroument.

New Spelling was accepted in 1956, with small amendments, by the *American Simplified Spelling Association*, was further developed and computerized by Edward Rondthaler in New York (1986), and was revised in the 1980s, its most recent form being published in the Society's Pamphlet No. 12, *New Spelling 90* (1991). It also provided the phonographic analysis on which Sir James Pitman based his *initial teaching alphabet* (*i.t.a.*) (1959). To date, however, the system has had little impact on the English-using world, and there appears currently to be little general interest in reform, and considerably less interest among langauge scholars than a century or even half a century ago.

Appendix 5

The following extract is taken from **"Look Back In Anger"**, by John Osborne. The action is set in a large, one-room flat in a Midland town. Jimmy and his wife Alison are together in the flat with friend and neighbour, Cliff, on a Sunday afternoon in April. All are in their mid-twenties.

Explain how language is used to establish points about characters, establish relationships and convey possible themes.

In your answer you should refer to vocabulary and meanings, grammar, tone and any other linguistic matters you think are relevant.

JIMMY: You sit there like a lump of dough. I thought you were going to make me some tea.

Cliff groans. Jimmy turns to Alison.
Is your friend Webster coming tonight?

ALISON: He might drop in. You know what he is.

JIMMY: Well, I hope he doesn't. I don't think I could take Webster tonight.

ALISON: I thought you said he was the only person who spoke your language.

JIMMY: So he is. Different dialect but same language. I like him. He's got bite, edge drive -

ALISON: Enthusiasm.

JIMMY: You've got it. When he comes here, I begin to feel exhilarated. He doesn't like me, but he gives me something, which is more than I get from most people. Not since -

ALISON: Yes, we know. Not since you were living with Madeline. *She folds some of the clothers she has already ironed, and crossesto the bed with them.*

CLIFF: (*behind paper again*). Who's Madeline?

ALISON: Oh, wake up, dear. You've heard about Madeline enough times. She was his mistress. Remember? When he was fourteen. Or was it thirteen?

JIMMY: Eighteen.

ALISON: He owes just about everything to Madeline.

CLIFF: I get mixed up with all your women. Was she the one all those years older than you?

JIMMY: Ten years.

CLIFF: Proper little Marchbanks, you are!

JIMMY: What time's that concert on? (*checks paper*)

CLIFF: (*yawns*). Oh, I feel so sleepy. Don't feel like standing behind that blinking sweet-stall again tomorrow. Why don't you do it on your own, and let me sleep in?

JIMMY: I've got to be at the factory first thing, to get some more stock, so you'll have to put it up on your own. Another five minutes.

Allison has returned to her ironing board. She stands with her arms folded, smoking, staring thoughtfully.

She had more animation in her little finger than you two put together.

CLIFF: Who did?

ALISON: Madeline.

JIMMY: Her curiosity about things, and about people was staggering. It wasn't just a naive nosiness. With her, it was simply the delight of being awake, and watching.

Alison starts to press Cliff's trousers.

CLIFF: *(behind the paper).* Perhaps I will make some tea, after all.

JIMMY: *(quietly).* Just to be with her was an adventure. Even to sit on the top of a bus with her was like setting out with Ulysses.

CLIFF: Wouldn't have said Webster was much like Ulysses. He's an ugly little devil.

JIMMY: I'm not talking about Webster, stupid. He's all right though, in his way. A sort of female Emily Bronte. He's the only one of your friends (*to Alison*) who's worth tuppence, anyway. I'm surprised you get on

with him.

ALISON: So is he, I think.

JIMMY: (*rising to window R., and looking out*) He's not only got guts, but sensitivity as well. That's about the rarest combination I can think of. None of your other friends have got either.

ALISON: (*very quietly and earnestly*). Jimmy, please - don't go on.

He turns and looks at her. The tired appeal in her voice has pulled him up suddenly. But he soon gathers himself for a new assault. He walks C., behind Cliff, and stands, l looking down at his head.

JIMMY: Your friends - there's a shower for you.

CLIFF: (*mumbling*). Dry up. Let her get on with my trousers.

JIMMY: (*musingly*). Don't think I could provoke her. Nothing I could do would provoke her. Not even if I were to drop dead.

CLIFF: Then drop dead.

JIMMY: They're either militant like her Mummy and Daddy. Militant, arrogant and full of malice. Or vague. She's somewhere between the two.

CLIFF: Why don't you listen to that concert of yours? And don't stand behind me. That blooming droning on behind me gives me a funny feeling down the spine.

Jimmy gives his ears a twist and Cliff roars with pain. Jimmy grins back at him.

That hurt, you rotten sadist! (*To Alison*) I wish you'd kick his head in for him.

JIMMY: (*moving in between them*). Have you ever seen her brother? Brother Nigel? The straight-backed, chinless wonder from Sandhurst? I only met him once myself. He asked me to step outside when I told his mother she was evil minded.

In any case, there seem to be sudden bursts of vocabulary growth in most children, often coinciding with the child's interest in some activity, then periods when nothing much seems to happen. It is actually quite hard to tell for certain, because there are no simple and accurate ways of measuring how large a child's vocabulary is at any one time.

But if children do not learn to speak and understand English at a steady rate of progress, how do they do it? The answer seems to be that the ability to use and understand language develops in stages. A stage in this context means a period of time when a child's language is dominated by one particular mode or way of communicating meanings. You can see the clearest examples in children's use of grammar, where linguists have detected at least three major stages of development, each leading to the next, until finally the child can use nearly all of the phrase and sentence patterns of the language.

The first of these stages is the *holophrastic stage*, where the child uses a single word to express his meanings. The second is the *two-word stage*, where the child uses two words put together, not as *subject + verb* as we might expect, but according to rules which the child has worked out for himself. The third is the *telegraphic stage*, where the child uses utterances of three, four and more words to convey meaning, but tends to use mainly content words like nouns, adjectives and verbs.

Stage 1: Holophrastic Stage

Child's Utterance	*Context or Explanation*
mama	Response to a poster of a woman
crustie	The child's crust of bread has fallen to the floor, and he wants someone to pick it up
vaukie	(i) In response to his mother saying, '*Want to walk?*' indicating that the child does want to go for a walk. (ii) Later, trying to climb out of his pram, perhaps verbalising his intention to walk

Stage 2: Two-Word Stage

Child's Utterance	*Context or Explanation*
pretty goggie	Looking at his soft toy dog
goggie gone	His toy dog has dropped underneath his cot
pretty beads	Looking at his mother's new necklace
more bikky	Asking for another biscuit

Stage 3: Telegraphic Stage

Child's Utterance	*Context or Explanation*
me want that	Pointing at plasticine
baby in big bed	'The baby is sleeping in the big bed.'
you play snakes and ladders me	'Will you play snakes and ladders with me?'

1. What different purposes might a child use these words for at the holophrastic stage of language acquisition?

daddy	bissy (referring to a biscuit)
me	water
again	

2. Can you detect any patterns in this collection of utterances from a child at the two-word utterance stage?

my doll	allgone bissy
doll	Mummy
there birdie	there Mummy
there doll	allgone birdie

3. Look carefully at the utterances which follow. Those in the first group were spoken by a girl called Sophie at the age of 2 years 4 months, and those in the second group were spoken by Sophie at 3 years 5 months. How would you describe the differences between the two sets?

Group 1

Sophie at 2 years 4 months

me want that
me want a bissy
Mary come me
me want daddy come down
that's a mess
want put milk in there
read that
no I got any hoover
our play that on floor
why those two nother things broke?

Group 2

Sophie at 3 years 5 months

is it dark outside?
I thought you coming straight after lunch here
can I borrow your corder (= recorder (musical instrument))
want to do it on the piano
her got a colour one like this
I can stand on there without my shoes on
I want to ring up somebody and her won't be there tomorrow

Act 1 Scene 4
Vienna The Convent of Saint Clare

Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA a nun

ISABELLA And have you nuns no farther privileges?
NUN Are not these large enough?
ISABELLA Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more,
But rather wishing a more strict restraint
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.
LUCIO (*Within*) Ho? Peace be in this place.
ISABELLA Who's that which calls?
NUN It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,
Turn you the key and know his business of him.
You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn:
When you have vowed, you must not speak with men
But in the presence of the prioress;
Then if you speak you must not show your face,
Or if you show your face you must not speak.
He calls again: I pray you answer him. [*Stands aside*]
ISABELLA Peace and prosperity. Who is't that calls?

[*Enter* LUCIO]

LUCIO Hail virgin, if you be – as those cheek-roses
Proclaim you are no less – can you so stead me
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,
A novice of this place and the fair sister
To her unhappy brother Claudio?
ISABELLA Why 'her unhappy brother'? Let me ask,
The rather for I now must make you know
I am that Isabella, and his sister.
LUCIO Gentle and fair: your brother kindly greets you.
Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

1 First sight of Isabella (in small groups)

Every director, and every actress who plays Isabella, gives a great deal of thought to how she should first appear. What should be the audience's first sight of her? Talk together about the following:

- What is she wearing – and why?
- How does she speak her first four lines?
- Why does she wish for 'a more strict restraint'? (the Poor Clares were already a very strict order of nuns)
- How do her first four lines link her with Angelo?
- How do they link her with Claudio?

Write up your conclusions.

2 Should the audience laugh? (in small groups)

Francisca the nun has only these few lines. As a director of the play, would you want to make the audience laugh when she tells the rules of the convent (lines 7–14)? Try different ways of speaking these lines to find what audience response you wish to evoke (for example, laugh, smile, accept seriously, and so on).

IMPOTICAL	DANGEROUS
STUG	TRUE
STRADENT	SENSIBLE
VOLU	POPULAR
PLACKAL	EXCLUSIVE
SLAFA	UNRELIABLE
BRIPPA	LOVER

IMLOK	USEFUL
GABRAL	FAMOUS
LAPARIC	TIDY
RONTEMA	SORRY
MECOLIC	HORRIBLE
BACRABLE	SURPRISING
SALOC	FAIR
DROLNISH	FUNNY
FLIMEAL	ODD

Appendix 9

Y12 English Language
Conversation Analysis Mini-Project

Distinctive Features of Conversation

Length of Utterance:	often short, usually special circumstances when long. What governs the length of what someone says?
Grammar:	not always fully formed S.E. sentences - SVO surprising comparison with scripted drama. What is real?
Adjacency Pairs:	one participant's words follow another's. How are they linked? In what circumstances might the link break down?
Turn Taking:	usually turns are taken smoothly. How does one know when it is one's turn? Why do overlaps happen? How does a participant hold onto his/her turn, prevent others?
Voice Quality:	loudness, stress/emphasis, tempo, pitch (constant, rise/fall) Do these features mean anything? What are they linked to?
Pauses:	they are frequent and vary in length. Do they mean anything?
Accent and Dialect:	these features are likely in speech.

Context

Purpose:	is it an argument, discussion, Q/A session, negotiation, small-talk. What is the purpose of the conversation? Does it have more than one?
Audience:	who is involved, what is their relationship? Who dominates the conversation, how big a part does each play?

Data:	The Wilkins Family: 3 transcripts from the BBC
Research Question:	a) In the data, identify some of the distinctive features of conversation. b) Make any links that you can between the context of the conversations and the participants' use of these features to signal their meanings, moods and intentions.
To Be Completed:	After Easter Break

T =mm=
Ma =mm

(b) *Second extract*
Mi Had you thought of the organ
(.)
er
(.)
Ma er[m / *Mi* Have] you:: looked that far ahead yet [*Ma* Not / or] really
actually I::'[ve / *Mi* No] erm
(.)
Mi Normally these days we don't sing *The Voice that Breath'd o'er Eden*
T *[laughs]*
Ma *[laughs]*
Mi er you know neither do we sing *Rescue the Perishing*
T I was just about to suggest that you would really want one because as you say it sort of puts the finishing touches to [it / *Mi* that] 's right=
Ma =Well y- [it'd / *Mi* Yeah] be dead without it wouldn't it
Mi Ye::s=
Ma =mm=
Mi =Yes ↑Good↑
(2.0)
Mi Now is there any question you'd like to (.) bring to me
T See:: ↑when↑ we fir- ↑at↑ first we thought you know:: me and Marion started living together and that [(.) / *Mi* mm] we thought that might have had the effect on the Church like you know
(.)
hh I mean=
Mi =Look Tom (.) if only people would remember (.) we're not here to prejudge any [body / *T* mm]
Mi I am not=
T = mm no
Mi and (.) I:: (.) I say this that ↑if I can perform this ser::vice↑ [to / *T* mm] get you to do /ðiː/ (.) honour [able thing / *T* honourable thing] you [know / *T* which is] marriage then:: you can face the world [and / *T* mm] you say:: (.) she belongs to me [(.) / *T* mm] I belong [to her / *T* mm] ↑it's↑ as simple as that

4.5 Practical exercises in broad phonetic transcription

Activity 4.8

Section 9 of the tape contains a passage spoken in RP. Listen to it and make a segmental transcription using phonetic symbols.

Commentary

In using phonetic symbols, you have transcribed the successive speech **segments** of the words. As mentioned in section 4.2, however, the **supra-segmental** features of pitch, loudness, rhythm and tempo are also important elements of natural speech.

In the transcription printed below, the passage has been divided into sections known as **tone-units**. The boundaries of tone-units may be marked by a variety of features, including abrupt changes in pitch and/or loudness, short pauses, and lengthening of the last speech sound in the unit.

Within each tone-unit one syllable, called the **tonic syllable**, is more prominent than the others. This extra prominence is caused mainly by a definite movement of pitch over the syllable, which may continue over any following syllables within the tone-unit. Pitch movement can be rising (e.g. Ḱent), falling (e.g. wèather), rising-falling (e.g. N̂orth), or falling-rising (e.g. S̆ummer). Different meanings and attitudes are conveyed by such pitch movements, called **tones**. In the transcription, tonic syllables are underlined. Other syllables in tone-units carry stress also, but the tonic syllable, which usually specifies new information, stands out more.

Segmental and supra-segmental features may be transcribed separately or together. The following transcription of the passage in Activity 4.8 uses ordinary spelling, and indicates the supra-segmental features of tone units, tonic stress and pitch movement only.

on the first day of British Sŭmmer Time | the winter
wèather | has still got much of the cóuntry | in its
grĭp | with ĭcy roads | as far south as Ként | and
Hàmpshire | but it's still the Nôrth | that's móst
affected | with the wòrst conditions | now moving
north-wèstwards | into Scòtland |

	RP pronunciation
THERE	ðɛə
BUS	bʌs
CAR	kɑ
BATH	bɑθ
DOWN	dɑʊn
COT	kɒt
DANCE	dɑns
CITY	sɪtɪ
AFTER	ɑftə
FUR	fɜ
FAIR	fɛə
WHO	hu
HUGH	hjʊ
PUT	pʊt
PUTT	pʌt
PULL	pʊl
POOL	pul
POOR	pɔ
FAR	fɑ
FIRE	fɑɪə
SINGING	sɪŋɪŋ
THREE	θri
OFF	ɒf
BOTTLE	bɒtəl
HOSPITAL	hɒspɪtəl
ROAD	rəʊd
ABOUT	əbaʊt
THEM	ðem

The International Phonetic Alphabet

The 45 symbols used in the varieties of English.

ENGLISH CONSONANT SOUNDS

Symbol	*Example*		*Short Description*
			Plosives
p	pi:	pea	Bilabial, voiceless
b	bi:	bee	Bilabial, voiced
t	tu:	too	Alveolar, voiceless
d	du:	do	Alveolar, voiced
k	ki:	key	Velar, voiceless
g	gou	go	Velar, voiced
			Nasals
m	mai	my	Bilabial, voiced
n	nau	now	Alveolar, voiced
ŋ	siŋ	sing	Velar, voiced[1]
			Lateral
l	lou	low	Alveolar, voiced
			Fricatives
f	feə*	fair	Labio-dental, voiceless
v	vau	vow	Labio-dental, voiced
θ	θin	thin	Linguo-dental, voiceless
ð	ðen	then	Linguo-dental, voiced
s	soun	sown	Alveolar, voiceless
z	zoun	zone	Alveolar, voiced
ʃ	ʃou	show	Palato-alveolar, voiceless
ʒ	pleʒə*	pleasure	Palato-alveolar, voiced[1]
h	hai	high	Laryngal, voiceless[2]
			Semi-vowels
w	wei	way	Bilabial and velar, voiced[3]
r	rɔ:	raw	Post-alveolar, voiced[3]
j	ju:	you	Palatal, voiced[3]
			Affricates
tʃ	tʃə:tʃ	church	Post-alveolar, voiceless
dʒ	dʒʌdʒ	judge	Post-alveolar, voiced

ENGLISH VOWEL SOUNDS

No.	*Symbol*	*Example*		*Short Description*
				Pure Vowels
1	i	si:	see	Front, close
2	ɪ	sit	sit	Front, close to half close[4]
3	e	set	set	Front, half close to half open[3]
4	æ	sat	sat	Front, half open to open[3]
5	ɑ	fa:*	far	Back, open
6	ɒ	gɒt	got	Back, open, rounded[3]
7	ɔ	sɔ:	saw	Back, half open, rounded
8	ʊ	fʊt	foot	Back, half close to close, rounded[4]
9	u	tu:	too	Back, close, rounded
10	ʌ	ʌp	up	Central, half open, unrounded[3]
11	ɜ	fɜ:*	fur	Central, half open to half close
12	ə	əgou	ago	Central, half open to half close[5]
				Falling Diphthongs
13	eɪ	meɪ	may	Narrow, front
14	əʊ	nou	no	Narrow, central to back
15	aɪ	maɪ	my	Wide, front
16	aʊ	naʊ	now	Wide, back
17	ɔɪ	bɔɪ	boy	Wide, back to front
				Centring Diphthongs
18	ɪə	dɪə*	dear	Front, half close
19	ɛə	peə*	pair	Front, half open
20	ɒə	kɔə	core	Back, half open
21	ʊə	tuə*	tour	Back, half close[1]

* Indicates that r is added when the word is followed immediately by one beginning with a vowel or diphthong.

[1] Never occurs in initial position in native English words.

[2] Never occurs in final position and is weakened or completely elided when it occurs at the beginning of an unstressed syllable.

[3] Never occurs in final position in native English words.

[4] Never occurs in stressed final position in native English words.

[5] Never occurs stressed in native English words.

THE PARDONER'S TALE

In Flaundres whilom was a compaignye
Of yonge folk that hauteden folye,
As riot, hasard, stywes, and tavernes,
Where as with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They daunce and pleyen at dees bothe day and night,
And eten also and drinken over hir might,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifise
Withinne that develes temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluitee abhominable.
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable
That it is grisly for to heere hem swere.
Oure blissed Lordes body they totere-
Hem thoughte that Jewes rente him noght ynough;
And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
And right anon thanne comen tombesteres
Fetys ans smale, and yonge frutesteres,
Singeres with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed unto glotonye.
The hooly writ take I to my witnesse:
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.

Appendix 12

'The Development of Phonemes in Young Children' from 'Child Language, Learning and Linguistics' by David Crystal

The learning of the sound system of a language, then, begins at around 9 months, with the child beginning to discriminate and produce the vowel and consonant phonemes of the language, in the many contexts in which they occur. It is a long process, that is not completed until around 7 years of age. It is also a complicated process, that is not fully understood, though several stages of development are apparent, and some of the processes which govern development are known. In addition, we may state with confidence that certain things do *not* happen. For example, it is not possible to generalize about the order in which children pick up the actual *sounds* of the language: no two children that have been studied have been identical in every respect. Some start with a *p* sound (along with a vowel), some with *m*, some with *d*, and so on. On the other hand, it does seem possible to suggest certain general tendencies, based on the *type* of sound that is produced, and taking into account the fact that some sounds are more audible than others (e.g. [a] over [i], vowels over consonants), some are more difficult to produce than others (e.g. consonant clusters over consonants; [r] or [z] over [t] or [f]), some are more frequently used than others (e.g. [t], [s]), and so on. For example. it has been suggested that children tend to use front consonants (like *p*, *b*, *m*,) before back (like *k*, *g*); plosives (like *p*, *b*) before fricatives (like *f*, *v*, *s*, *z*); and oral sounds (like *d*, *g*) before their nasal equivalents (like *n*, *ng*). Syllables will begin by being Consonant – Vowel in structure (so-called 'open' syllables); clusters of consonants will tend to appear at the ends of words (as in *cats*, *jump*) before the beginnings (as in *stick*. *train*); and so on. A diagram which orders the appearance of consonant phonemes in English with respect to chronological age is as follows:

By 2	p b m n w
2½	t d k g ŋ (as in si*ng*) h
3	f s l y (as in *y*ou)
4	ʃ (as in *sh*ip) v z r tʃ (as in *ch*ew) dʒ (as in *j*uice)
5	θ (as in *th*ink) ð (as in *th*is)
6	ʒ (as in mea*s*ure)

Figure 4 Average age estimates for the acquisition of English consonants.[9]

Any such diagram, it is clear, omits a great deal, and is misleading in its simplicity. Figure 4 says nothing about where in a word the phonemes are used. or how accurately they are pronounced; it says nothing about which phonemes children have difficulty discriminating; nor about the nature of any general processes which may govern the way in which these sounds are strung together into sequences (e.g. the 'reduplicative' pattern of early syllable sequences, such as *baba*, *dada*, *tete*); nor about the types of simplification of complex sounds which they are mastered is common to all. In pronunciation, for example, certain categories of sound will be discriminated and will be produced before others: it would be improbable to find a child for whom consonants such as /s/ or /z/ were being systematically produced before consonants such as /m/ or /d/, for instance. Likewise in grammar, all children begin with simple one-word utterances (e.g. *dada!*) and proceed in stages to more complex sentence types (see below). But before giving details, it is important to stress that postulating a common order does not imply an identical *rate* of development. On the contrary, it is a commonplace that there may be very great differences in the speed at which a given linguistic feature is acquired, within the spectrum of 'normal' children.

Discussion

The child here seems to be doing two sorts of things. The child is either missing sounds out completely i.e. deleting them, or replacing certain sounds with others.

The consonant deletions are:

/ð/ at the beginning of the word *the*
/z/ at the end of the the word *pipers*
/s/ at the beginning of the word *stole*
/l/ at the end of the word *stole*

The consonant replacements are:

/d/ for /t/ at the beginning of the word *Tom*
/b/ for /p/ at the beginning and middle of the word *Piper*
/m/ for /n/ at the end of the word *son*
/d/ for /t/ at the beginning of the reduced word *(s)tole*
/b/ for /p/ at the beginning of the word *pig*
/d/ for /g/ at the end of the word *pig*
/j/ for /r/ at the beginning of the word *run*

The consonant deletions are of two sorts. Consonants can occur in two sorts of place or context in a word, (i) either next to a vowel, as in *the*, or (ii) next to another consonant, as in *stole*. Where there is a sequence of adjacent consonants and one of them is deleted, we can say that there has been a **consonant cluster reduction.**

The consonant replacements are also of two sorts - (i) replacement of one sound by another where there is no similarity with regard to place of contact in the mouth; or (ii) replacement of one sound by another which involves some sort of contact or approximate contact at exactly the same place in the mouth.

Replacement of the first sort is to be found with the /n/ in the word *son* and /g/ in pig.

Replacement of the second sort is to be found with the /t/ in the word *Tom*, /p/ in *Piper*, /p/ in *pig*, /r/ in *run*, and /t/ in *stole*. Is there some sort of pattern to the way the child changes these sounds?

Standard and Nonstandard Dialects

Appendix 13

'Dialect' definitions

'I have used the word *dialect* for any form of English which differs from Standard English in grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and ... pronunciation.' (Abercrombie 1951, in Petyt 1980)

'... a dialect simply defined as a variety of a language, generally mutually intelligible with other varieties of that language, but set off from them by a unique complex of features of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Dialect, thus used, is not a derogatory term but a descriptive one ....' (Raven McDavid, in Kretzschmar 1988)

'Dialect' usage in the Cox Report

'On purely linguistic grounds, [Standard English] is not inherently superior to *other* non-standard *dialects* of English, but it clearly has social prestige.' (Cox 5.42)

'[Standard English is] a *dialect* which has historical, geographical and social origins although, with some variations, it now has worldwide uses.' (Cox 4.9)

Standard English is an international *language* used throughout the world and essential for many purposes.' (Cox 4.5)

(*English for ages 5 to 16* ['the Cox Report']: my italics)

The standard as passport

'... the parents scarcely ever succeed in talking the Standard language quite naturally, but the children can attain to it. And this is to their advantage, not merely materially, because they can more easily obtain positions in society which now–whether one approves it or not in the abstract–are given by preference to people whose speech is free from dialect, but also because they thus escape being looked down on on account of their speech and are therefore saved from many unpleasant humiliations. Apart from all this, merely by reason of speaking they have a better chance of coming in contact with others and getting a fuller interchange of ideas.' (Jespersen 1925, in Joseph, *Eloquence and Power*, p. 44)

The standard as national symbol

'In the absence of a common, nationwide, ethnic and cultural identity new nations proceed to plan and create such an identity through national symbols.... It is at this point that a national language is frequently invoked (along with a national flag, a national ruler, a national mission etc.) as a unifying symbol.' (Fishman 1968, in Joseph, p. 72)

The religious superstandard

Throughout Western culture, and in many other cultures besides, the belief is commonplace that the deity or deities should be addressed in a standard language—in an archaic standard language, if one is available, or at least in as conservative and archaizing a form of the standard as does exist.... It is not unusual to hear even impromtu prayer being carried on in English with God addressed as *thou*. We would not term this usage 'non-standard'. It is, in a sense, superstandard. The person praying violates a contemporary norm in order to exploit every bit of the authority and status which the standard language enjoys.' (Joseph, p. 73)

'The word of God is supposed to be a bit over our heads.' (HRH the Prince of Wales, December 1989)

'Churchmen ought to realise, and acknowledge, that the more 'understandable' you make God, the more fatuous or foul you make him.... Remove mystery and you are well on the way to discrediting and then demolishing religion.' (D.J. Enright, *The Observer*, 24 December 1989)

'Foregrounding' of the medium, Prague School of linguists

'The violation of the norm of the standard, as systematic violation, is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language; without this possibility there would be no poetry. The more the norm of the standard is stabilized in a given language, the more varied can be its violation, and therefore the more possibilities for poetry in that language.' (Mukarovsky 1932, in Joseph, p. 77)

Populist pseudo-linguistics

"We've got to produce people who can write proper English. It's a fundamental problem. All the people I have in my office, they can't speak English properly, they can't write English properly. All the letters sent from my office I have to correct myself, and that is because English is taught so bloody badly. If we want people who write good English and write plays for the future, it cannot be done with the present system, and all the nonsense academics come up with. It is a fundamental problem. We must educate for character. That's the trouble with schools. They don't educate for character. This matters a great deal. The whole way schools are operating is not right. I do not believe English is being taught properly. You cannot educate people unless you do it on a basic framework and drilling system.' (HRH the Prince of Wales, 28 June 1989 [Cox published 22 June 1989])

'When the Prince of Wales said that English is taught badly ... he was echoing the concems of parents and employers. ... It has been fashionable to use 'socio-economic' factors to excuse poor standards. The bleaters were always looking for excuses. ... [This was] the argument trotted out for so long by the glib designers of education. ... [The National Curriculum] means clear standards for reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. ... Common sense is winning out. Common sense is back in fashion. Standards of English must improve. ... we must not let our children down for they are the future of our nation.' (Kenneth Baker, *Sunday Express*, 2 July 1989)

'We've allowed so many standards to slip.... Teachers weren't bothered to teach kids to spell and to punctuate properly.... If you allow standards to slip to the stage where good English is no better than bad English, where people turn up filthy ... at school.... All those things tend to cause people to have no standards at all, and once you lose standards then there's no imperative to stay out of crime.' (Norman Tebbitt, Radio 4, November 1985)

A retort

'It is worth asking [the] pseudo-grammarians when exactly, pray, was this golden age of grammar? It always turns out to have been when the dyslexicographers were at school, being taught 'correct' English grammar. It is noticeable that the grumblers about the state of the English language are all white, almost all men, almost all middle-class, and all middle-aged, temperamentally if not temporally. They find themselves surrounded by new ideas, new languages, new culture, new and younger rivals, and a new world they find threatening. The only thing that they feel qualified to pontificate about is the English language. But when they say that English is going to the dogs, and the young do not use it properly any more, they are transferring their general *angst* by displacement to a common target. (Philip Howard [Literary Editor], *The Times*, 21 December 1989)

A warning

'By sanctioning class transcendence through insistence on rites of passage and the performance of ritual, including the learning of the standard language, the leisure class assists the power elite in skimming off the most dynamic yet docile elements of the underpriviledged classes for membership in the leisure class. This strengthens the elite both by adding 'new blood' and by depleting the lower classes of their most favored members.' (Brakel 1978, in Joseph, p. 44)

Cox, 'appropriateness', and political priorities

On the one hand, appropriateness helps rationalise a policy of teaching children to understand and produce spoken and written standard English while apparently respecting other dialects and languages. This policy is justified in terms of the 'entitlement' of children to the 'opportunity' which standard English opens up for them. But teaching the appropriate use of standard English inevitably has other effects which the Cox Report remains silent about: it uses the educational system to transmit shared language values (if not practices) based around the hegemony of a particular dialect, but in a way which overcomes on the surface the contemporary dilemma of how to do that while making the politically necessary concessions to liberalism and pluralism. This use of the educational system corresponds to a traditional establishment (or 'Old Right' as Barnes (1988) puts it) agenda. Language standardisation after all is first a matter of hegemony--the hegemony of a particular class extended to the linguistic sector of the cultural domain, manifested as the hegemony of a dialect--and only consequentially a matter of opportunity.

On the other hand, appropriateness helps rationalise the extension to language of a competence-based model of education. Whereas the teaching of the standard is an Old Right priority, teaching language competences and skills is a priority of the modernising New Right (Barnes 1988, Hewitt 1989). It is based upon a planning perspective and the anticipation of new requirements for employees and citizens. It is oriented to a new conception of citizenship, and a sense that modes of hegemony must change in a rapidly changing world. What appropriateness helps to do, in the Cox Report for example, is effect a compromise between these Old Right and New Right perspectives and priorities. It is the linchpin which holds them together in an uneasy, and no doubt temporary, harmony.

(Norman Fairclough, 'The Appropriacy of "Appropriateness"', *Critical Language Awareness*, pp. 42-43)

Cox 4.41

Pupils need to be able to discuss the contexts in which Standard English is obligatory and those where its use is preferable for social reasons. By and large, the pressures in favour of Standard English will be greater when the language is written, formal and public. Non-standard forms may be much more widely tolerated--and, in some cases preferred--when the language is spoken, informal and private.

Appendix 14

Wuthering Heights

1. Look carefully at the first passage on the accompanying sheet:

   (i) What differences do you notice between Lockwood's language and that of the other characters represented? Be precise and detailed in your comments. Annotate the passage if it is helpful to you.

   (ii) What do these differences in language imply about the characters, their expectations and their compatibility?

2. Look at the 2nd passage: This is Lockwood"speaking'.

   (i) Compare and contrast the language of the two paragraphs in this passage. Which creates the more vivid/concrete response in you as reader? Analyse how this is done.

   (ii) As a reader, 'where' do you feel you 'are' as you read each paragraph? Where is your attention directed?

3. Look at passage 3 from Heathcliff's account of the visit to Thrushcross Grange:

   (i) Is the language a convincing/realistic representation of Heathcliff's possible style of narration? What words or phrases seem improbable or lacking in 'naturalism'?

   (ii) What do you notice about the verbs/works describing action and movement?

4. Look at passage 4 from p.123 : Here Nelly is the narrator. Do you think the language is convincing as the speech of a Yorkshire servant in the Nineteenth Century? Underline words/phrases you think are unconvincing or not naturalistic.

   Underline words/phrases you think are colloquial/provincial, typical of a servant in Yorkshire in the Nineteenth Century.

5. Compare passages 5 and 6: Describe in detail and depth (at least half a side - more if possible.) the differences and similarities between the language of the two passages.

1.

a) **Heathcliff:** 'What the devil is the matter?'

Lockwood: 'The herd of possessed swine could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals of yours, sir.' (Ch. 1, p.49)

b) **Lockwood:** 'I'm afraid, Mrs Heathcliff, the floor must bear the consequences of your servants' leisure attendance.'

Hareton: 'Sit down!..... He'll be in soon.' (Ch. 1, p.52)

c) **Lockwood:** 'A beautiful animal! Do you intend parting with the little ones, madam?'

Cathy: 'They are not mine!' (Ch. 1, p.52)

d) **Lockwood:** 'Ah, certainly - I see now; you are the favoured possessor of the benificient fairy?'

Hareton: 'My name is Hareton Earnshaw, and I'd counsel you to respect it!' (Ch. 1, pp. 55-6).

2.

On that black hill-top the earth was hard with a black frost, and the air made me shiver through every limb. Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry bushes, knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled, and the dogs howled.

'Wretched inmates!' I ejaculated, mentally, 'you deserve perpetual isolation from your species for your churlish inhospitality. At least, I would not keep my doors barred in the day time - I don't care - I will get in!' (Ch. 2, p. 51)

3.

' "Run, Heathcliff, run!" she whispered. "They have let the bull-dog loose, and he holds me!"
'The devil had siezed her ankle, Nelly: I heard his abominable snorting. She did not yell out - no! She would have scorned to do it, if she had been spitted on the horns of a mad cow. I did, though, I vociferated curses enough to annihilate any fiend in Christendom, and I got a stone and thrust it between his jaws, and tried with all my might to cram it down his throat .... (Ch. 6, p. 90)

4.

I went and called, but got no answer. On returning, I whispered to Catherine that he had heard a good part of what she said, I was sure; and told how I saw him quit the kitchen just as she complained of her brother's conduct regarding him.

She jumped up in a fine fright - flung Hareton onto the settle, and ran to seek for her friend herself, not taking leisure to consider why she was so flurried, or how her talk would have affected him.

She was absent such a while that Joseph proposed we should wait no longer. He cunningly conjectured they were staying away in order to avoid hearing his protracted blessing. They were 'ill eneugh for only fahl manners,' he affirmed. And, on their behalf, he added that night a special prayer to the usual quarter of an hour's supplication before meat, and would have tacked another to the end of the grace, had not his young mistress broken in upon him with a hurried command that he must run down the road, and, wherever Heathcliff had rambled, find and make him re-enter directly!

5.

We crowded round, and over Miss Cathy's head I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk - indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's - yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. I was frightened, and Mrs Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up - asking how could he fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed, and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad? (Ch. 4, pp. 77-8)

6.

The intimacy thus commenced, grew rapidly; though it encountered temporary interruptions, Earnshaw was not to be civilized with a wish; and my young lady was no philosopher, and no paragon of patience; but both their minds tending to the same point - one loving and desiring to esteem; and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed - they contrived in the end, to reach it.

You see, Mr Lockwood, it was easy enough to win Mrs Heathcliff's heart; but now, I'm glad you did not try - the crown of all my wishes will be the union of those two; I shall envy no one on their wedding day - there won't be a happier woman than myself in England! (Ch. 32, p. 346)